

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Seminar on

Ischwarchandra Vidyasagar: Present Times

(Ischwarchandra Vidyasagar O Bartaman Kal)

26th September 2001



on the occasion of
**THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF
PUNDIT ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR**



SEMINAR
ON
ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR:
PRESENT TIMES
(*Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar O Bartaman Kal*)

on
The occasion of the Birth Anniversary
of
ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR
on
26th September 2001

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Gandhi Memorial College

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The Asiatic Society

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Content

PROGRAMME	3
VIDYASAGAR—AN ILLUSTRIOUS CHARACTER OF THE 19TH CENTURY	5
SOME INFORMATION ABOUT VIDYASAGAR	17
PREFACE TO SARVADARSANASANGRAHA	19
ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR Mahatma Gandhi	21
মহাত্মা গান্ধীর দৃষ্টিতে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর অনুবাদিকা—অমিতা চক্রবর্তী	26
ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR AS A PROMOTER OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN BENGAL (Based on unpublished State Records) Brajendranath Banerji	35
WORKS OF VIDYASAGAR	59
SOME WORKS ON VIDYASAGAR	65
LIST OF BOOKS ON VIDYASAGAR IN THE COLLECTION OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY'S LIBRARY	91

Page No. _____

Date _____

Subject _____

Topic _____

Chapter _____

Section _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

**THE ASIATIC SOCIETY
1 PARK STREET
CALCUTTA - 700 016**

**A DAY LONG SEMINAR
ON
ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR :
PRESENT TIMES**

(Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar O Bartaman Kal)

**on the occasion of the Birth Anniversary
of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar**

**On
26th September 2001**

PROGRAMME

- 10.30 a.m. Opening Song : Shri Asim Dutta
10.33 a.m. Presentation of Bouquet to the dignitaries on dias
10.34 a.m. Recitation (Sonnet)

INAUGURAL SESSION

- 10.40 a.m. Welcome Address : Dr. Manabendu Banerjee
General Secretary,
The Asiatic Society
- 10.48 a.m. Inaugural Address : Prof. Satyasadhan Chakravorty
Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge
Higher Education,
Govt. of West Bengal
- 11.03 a.m. Key-note Address : Prof. Asit Bandyopadhyay
Research Professor,
The Asiatic Society
- 11.20 a.m. Introducing the Seminar: Dr. Amita Chakrabarti
Calcutta University

- 11.30 a.m. Presidential Address : Professor Biswanath Banerjee
President, The Asiatic Society
- 11.40 a.m. Vote of Thanks : Dr. Niranjan Goswami
Treasurer, The Asiatic Society

(Tea to be served in the Hall)

ACADEMIC SESSION—I

(11.45 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.)

- Theme* : Education and Culture
- Chairperson* : Dr. Ajit Kumar Ghosh
- Speakers* : Professor Pabitra Sarkar
Professor Nirmal Das
Shri Santosh Adhikari
Dr. Krishna Chakraborti

LUNCH BREAK

(1.30 p.m. – 2.30 p.m.)

A documentary film :
“Vidyasagar Shanchar Angikar : Vidyasagar College”
2.30 p.m. – 3.00 p.m.

ACADEMIC SESSION – II

(3.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.)

- Theme* : Social reform and women's emancipation
- Chairperson* : Dr. Bhabatosh Dutta
- Speakers* : Professor Bela Dutta Gupta
Professor Nemai Sadhan Bose
Professor Jasodhara Bagchi
Professor Amalendu De
Shri Aurobindo Guha
Dr. Amiya Kumar Samanta

(An exhibition will remain open in the Library on that day)

VIDYASAGAR—AN ILLUSTRIOUS CHARACTER OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The historians, sociologists and the litterateurs inferred that the all round rise of the middle class Bengali citizens by the influence of Western Education, civilisation and social idealism of the 19th C. can be compared to the Renaissance of the West. But that comparison is a bit far-fetched. Europe of the Middle Ages received blessings from the close association with the Hellenic civilization and culture. Similarly education based on English language and civilization was also at the root of the Renaissance of Bengal. According to the historians that was the New Awakening of the 19th Century Bengal or the Renaissance of the Bengalis of the 19th C.

The final curtain fell on the Nawab family in the noon of 23rd June, 1757, in the field of Plassey and the English merchants forcefully took away the freedom and the independence of the Bengalis towards the end of the 18th C. Then there started the colonial rule and economic exploitation and a new era began in education. This has been called the Renaissance of the Bengalis, "It was truly a Renaissance, wider, deeper and more revolutionary than that of Europe, after the fall of Constantinople" (*History of Bengal, Vol II*, edited by Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Dacca University, 1948). Though this is an exuberant statement yet the middle class Bengali Society of the 19th C. having western education believed it to be true to a great extent. It cannot be denied that there was an influence of Western thought behind the evolution which took place in the field of religion, literature and education of the Bengalis from the time of Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886).

In this context it should be remembered that Western influence alone did not speed up this New Awakening of the Bengalis because along with it there were the Indianness and Bengali's own culture. Otherwise the 19th C. Renaissance of the Bengalis would have turned into a matter of artificial imitation. As there was the Hindu College (founded on 20th Jan. 1817) on one side of the road, there was the Sanskrit College (1824) on the other side. The iconoclastic students of Derozio (1809-1831) of the Hindu College had become so radical minded that they neither followed the religious duties of the Hindus nor the Indian culture. Western ideals of education and philosophy had become their sole object of occupation. Scientific truth and rationalism had become their guiding elements. For this reason they (Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Ramgopal Ghose, Shivchandra Dev, Rasikkrishna Mullick etc.) were called 'Young Bengals' sometimes in praise and sometimes in censure. In spite of being a rationalist Rammohun acknowledged *Vedanta* and *Upanishads*, and for that he had been called 'theo-philanthropist' by Kishorichand Mitra. Though the 'Young Bengals' accepted his rationalism but they were not in favour of his religious thoughts.

At this time another person appeared in Bengal. In spite of his orthodox training and heritage and without initially knowing English he had an acquaintance with of the cultural heritage of the West. But he did not give up his own family tradition. This remarkable person was Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891). He was successfully able to harmonise two opposite flow of currents (that is the new western culture and Bengalis' own heritage).

The young men who were admirers and students of Derozio had mastered general and scientific knowledge of the West with much competence but as they had neglected Indian tradition, within a short time their radicalism found a place in the foot note of history but they could not connect themselves with the entirety of Bengali culture.

"But Young Bengal which contributed much to the renaissance in Bengal in the nineteenth century, failed to build

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

up a sustained movement and to develop ideology, to appreciate the necessity of effecting synthesis between the Western and Eastern cultures and to temper reasoning and intelligence with moderation and understanding. It proved ephemeral and unsubstantial and faded away slowly by the middle of the nineteenth century". (Atul Chandra Gupta (Ed) *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, 1958).

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar had been reared up in an atmosphere of Sanskrit education and learned English much later for the sake of his work and by this learning he became acquainted with the modern Western education and civilization. His paternal and maternal families were not rich but they were of strong character, magnanimous and had great admiration for Sanskrit education. His father, Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay had also a great liking for Sanskrit. But coming to Calcutta he had to take up a very ordinary occupation in order to support his family. His elder son Ishwarchandra was brought to Calcutta at the age of eight for higher education. The well-wishers advised Thakurdas to admit young Vidyasagar to the Hindu College so that Ishwarchandra could be well established in life by studying English. But Thakurdas ignored their advice. His wish was that his son should learn Sanskrit. It was also in his mind that that Ishwarchandra by studying various branches of Sanskrit would start *Tol* and *Catuspathis* in the villages by devoting himself in spreading Sanskrit learning among the students. That is why without paying any heed to the advice of his friends of Calcutta he admitted his son to the Sanskrit College. At that time Ishwarchandra was a mere boy of 9 years (June, 1829). His student life in this college was bright and he was extremely meritorious. Every year he got scholarships in Grammar, Rhetoric, Sanskrit literature, Vedanta, Smriti, Astronomy and Philosophy. Besides, he was also successful in the examination of English and Hindu Law Committee. After studying in the Sanskrit College for 12 years and 5 months he was conferred with the title of 'Vidyasagar' and by the gift of his genius from December 1841 he was appointed in the post of Seristadar or Head Pundit of the Bengali department of the Fort Will-

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

William College. Vidyasagar was also appointed in the said college for teaching Bengali language to the civilian sahibs. Observing his knowledge and wisdom, broadness of mind, upright character and mastery over Sanskrit, the higher British officials became admirers of this young teacher and appointed him as the assistant secretary of his "alma mater", the Sanskrit College. In this context there arose a difference of opinion between the Secretary Rasamay Dutta and Vidyasagar. Rasamoy used to oppose him practically in every reform activity. In July 1847, independent, resolute Vidyasagar resigned from his post in the Sanskrit College in spite of the request of his friends and admirers. But the fame of this young teacher brought him back again to the Fort William College and he was reappointed simultaneously in the post of Head Writer and Treasurer. Later at the request of higher officials he was appointed as the teacher of Literature of the Sanskrit College on 4th December, 1850. The responsibility of making syllabus and other matters of the Sanskrit College fell upon him because of his competency. On receiving his report the Board of Education bestowed on Vidyasagar the responsibility of reorganising the Sanskrit College. He showed his extraordinary capability in orderly administration of this college from 1851 to 1853. He brought about a revolutionary change in this educational institution by giving the right of Sanskrit education to all Hindu students along with the Brahmins. Later at his request and recommendation the successful students got the post of Deputy Magistrate and these students, well-versed in Sanskrit language, showed enough efficiency and capability in the government posts. The learning of Sanskrit became easier for the ordinary students because of the change of Sanskrit syllabus according to the spirit of the age. He started English education for the student of this college and English became a compulsory subject. Western methods were followed instead of the ancient methods of *Lilabati* and *Vijganit*. The Western knowledge and scientific truth were introduced in the curriculum. His opinion about Vedanta and Sankhya system of philosophy was to a great extent similar to that of Rammohun. Lord Dalhousie planned to establish a Sanskrit College with government grant for the

preservation of cultural heritage of India. Rammohun was vehemently opposed to the idea.¹ Because the Vedas and Vedanta are spiritual philosophy and not suitable for the age, therefore the government should not spend a huge sum of money for their teaching. In spite of being nurtured in an

1. Raja Rammohun Roy translated the Vedanta and the Upanishads into Bengali from Sanskrit and circulated them among the general public. But at the same time he admitted that all these mystic and philosophical literatures were not at all necessary or useful to the students. The Sanskrit College was going to be founded in Calcutta in 1823. When Rammohun heard that news he wrote a long letter (11th December, 1823) addressed to the then Governor General Lord Amherst opposing it. In his letter he clearly stated that in order to improve the system of education of the Indian subjects it is more necessary to attract them towards the scientific and useful knowledge of the West rather than studying the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Nyaya Shastra of India so that they could prove themselves as proper citizens of the future. There would be no benefit for the country if the Government Grant was spent only in teaching of Sanskrit. A lot of time is required in learning Sanskrit. He went on to say : "The Sanskrit language, so difficult that almost a life is necessary for the perfect acquisition, is well-known to have been for ages a lamentable check on the diffusion of knowledge..... Neither can such improvement arise from such speculations as the following : which are the themes suggested by the Vedanta—In what manner is the soul absorbed into the deity.

"What relation does it bear to the divine essence? Nor will youths be fitted to the better members of society by the Vedantic doctrines, which teach them to believe that all visible things have no real existence; that as father, brother etc., have no actual entirety, they consequently deserve no real affection, and therefore the sooner we escape from them and leave the world the better. Again, no essential benefit can be derived by the students of the Meemangsas from knowing what it is that makes the killer of a goat sinless on pronouncing certain passages of the Veds and what is the real nature and operative influence of the passages of the Veds, etc.

"Again the students of the Nyaya Shastra cannot to said to have improved his mind after he has learned it into how many ideal classes the object in the Universe are divided, and what speculative relation the Soul bears to the body, the body to the Soul, the eye to the ear, etc." Vide—*Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India*, published by Sadharan Brahma Samaj, 1983, edited by J.K. Mazumdar.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

atmosphere of ancient Indian religion and philosophy Vidyasagar admitted that the Vedanta and Sankhya philosophy were erroneous and Western philosophy should be studied to get over this influence.² It is indeed surprising that how a pundit, accustomed to Sanskrit learning, acquired this modern view. Vidyasagar was engaged in establishing schools for the education of boys and girls even while he was the principal of the Sanskrit College. He founded many schools in Midnapore, Burdwan and Hooghly. He also established many Normal Schools and Model schools for the introduction of new method of education. In 1850 he became the Honorary Secretary of the Bethune School.

Though Ishwarchandra was known as 'an ocean of learning' but in reality he was 'an ocean of compassion'. He used to feel endless pity and sympathy especially for the helpless condition of the womenfolk. He loved the uneducated poor Santhals more than the modern youths educated in Western education. Towards the end of his life he used to spend a lot of time among them and spent sufficient amount of money for their education and medical treatment.

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2. Vidyasagar could rise above conservatism in spite of being very learned in Sanskrit language, literature and Shastras. He was not narrowminded enough to believe that everything was written in the Sanskrit language and there was no need of accepting anything from the Western culture. In the month of July, August 1853, Dr J.R. Ballentyne, the Principal of the Benaras Government Sanskrit College prepared a draft of changes in the syllabus of teaching of Calcutta and Benaras Sanskrit College. But Vidyasagar, the Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, could not agree to some parts of it. In spite of his orthodox training and heritage, he gladly accepted modern education. In reply to the Report of Ballentyne he clearly said, "For certain reasons, which it is needless to state here, we are obliged to continue the teaching of the Vedanta and Sankhya, that the Vedanta and the Sankhya are false systems of Philosophy is no more a matter of dispute." (Vide—The Modern Review, Oct. 1927). In relation to this a comment of a columnist attracts our attention : "In spite of his orthodox training and heritage, Vidyasagar's outlook was remarkably similar to that of a modern European. In everything he undertook, he took up an essentially practical standpoint and showed the pertinacity and indomitable energy of John Bull." (Ibid)

One day on one of his visits to the village he heard wailing of a very young girl and immediately understood that one more was added to the number of child-widows. At the request of his mother he decided to go to Calcutta in order to consult different Shastras to find support for widow remarriage. Searching the Shastras widely he found a *sloka* in Parasara's Smriti stating that a woman may be remarried if the husband is a debauch, dead, takes up asceticism, impotent or ailing. With the help of the *sloka* he wrote two pamphlets supporting the remarriage of child-widows. On 4th October 1855 he appealed to the Government for legalising the widow remarriage. That year on 27th December, he made another application to the Government for the prevention of Kulinism (Polygamous practice).

On 16th July 1854, the widow remarriage became legalised in spite of vehement objection, non-cooperation and protest of many conservative personalities and organisations. But prevention of polygamy was not sanctioned by the Government since many important and respectable persons were against it. The Sepoy Mutiny had made the administration alarmed and so they could not ignore the public opinion in the prevention of polygamy. In order to legalise the widow remarriage Vidyasagar quoted instances from the Shastras. He had thought if he could give proofs of the provisions stated in the Shastras in support of the widow remarriage the people, opposed to it, would accept it. But he was mistaken since the pundits had no feeling for the helpless widows.

His contributions to the advancement of education of children and women are written in golden letters in the history of the evolution of education. He worked hard from the very beginning to make the foundation of education strong at the primary level. He wrote many primary texts suitable for children starting with the *Varnaparicaya*. These books were considered to be the only means of primary education of this country for a long period of time and its necessity and relevance have not yet been lost. He was endowed with a capability of forceful literary writing. He had published

graceful translations of English, Sanskrit and Hindustani classics in native tongue and also had some original writings full of literary flavour. If he wished he could have composed original books in Bengali prose language but he had no attraction for mere cultivation of literature. From this point of view he was a pragmatist.

His translation of some works of Kalidasa and Shakespeare were charming and captivating like the original works. While reading no artificiality can be discerned in them. He had an extraordinary expertise in constructing the form and beauty of Bengali prose. Before Vidyasagar, Rammohun Roy had constructed the framework of chaste Bengali prose and had made the loosely constructed prose language a language of reasoning. But till then it had not been possible to make it a language full of literary flavour. It was Vidyasagar who transformed the language of reasoning into an aesthetic language, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay³ changed that language to a language of art and Rabindranath Tagore introduced lyricism, imagination and joy of beauty in it. Whatever may be, Vidyasagar could

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3. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay were contemporaries. Both of them were genius and epoch makers in the field of Bengali language and literature. But Bankimchandra was not always in favour of the literary talent of Vidyasagar. He was a little conservative and did not support certain opinions and activities of Vidyasagar regarding social reformation. Bankimchandra's displeasure about Vidyasagar finds expression in an essay based on a book review. In 1871, this essay was published in the 104th number of the Calcutta Review. There is no doubt that this essay is very valuable as a brief survey of Bengali language and literature. But his uncharitable comments about the literary genius of Vidyasagar will certainly create a difference of opinion : "If successful translation from other languages constitute any claim to a high place as an author, we admit them in Vidyasagar's case; and if the compilation of very good primers, for instance, can in anyway strengthen his claim, his claim is strong. But we deny that either translating or primer-making evinces a high order of genius; and beyond translating and primer-making Vidyasagar has done nothing." (*English Works of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay*, Published by Vangiya Sahitya Parishad)

have created literature in chaste Bengali if he wished to but curbing this desire he gave his attention to use this prose style in spreading education. There is a difference of opinion among the critics regarding the question—who is the father of Bengali prose? Once there also arose a question as to who was the real creator of Bengali prose style—pundits of the Fort William College, Rammohun Roy or Vidyasagar. Later on while discussing the evolution of Bengali prose style it has been found that the formal form of Bengali prose was there in use from 16th C., after which the use of chaste prose style was in vogue for the next two centuries. That is why the pundits and the munshis of the Fort William College cannot claim to be the creator of Bengali prose, rather the claim for Rammohun in this matter is reasonable to some extent. There is no doubt that it was he who gave an organised form to the disorganised Bengali prose but it was Vidyasagar who for the first time gave form to what one means by artistic prose. Later on that style has been followed but some varieties and changes were noticed with change in authorship and time. But the main foundation of prose is based on the device introduced by Vidyasagar and rhythm and lyricism in prose was also noticed in his work. Therefore he has to be given the place of creator of Bengali literary prose while discussing its style and method.

Leaving aside the discussion of literature, a great personality with an upright character like Vidyasagar is a rarity, difficult to come across even in this age. He was born in a poor family, he had to acquire extraordinariness by enduring a lot of austerities. Poverty, instead of being an impediment, helped him to hold his head high above meanness of life. He could felicitate the great and could ignore meanness. It did not make a difference whether the person was a brahmin conversant in the Shastras or the modern youths educated in English, whether a British high official or a millionaire of this country. The important personalities who appeared like Prometheus with lighted torches in the first part of the New Awakening of Bengal in the 19th C. were Raja Rammohun Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Keshab Chandra Sen and

the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. But there was a difference between them and Vidyasagar. Since all of them were Theists and Rammohun was given the title of "Theophilanthropist" by Kishorichand Mitra. But Vidyasagar, in spite of his orthodox training and heritage put aside the concept of God and thought only about man. His life's mission was to remove their sorrow. Whether God exists or if He exists then what is His true Identity, all these questions did not perturb him. The suffering common man became his deity. His student, disciple and admirer Acharya Krishnakamal Bhattacharya said,

"Vidyasagar was an atheist, probably you do not know it. Those who knew him also did not engage in a controversy with him about that matter. ... the religious faith of the students of this country was shaken by the flood of thought of Western literature, the eternally accepted God of the Hindus was swept away in that flood. It is no wonder that Vidyasagar would be an atheist." (*Puratan Prasanga*—Bepinbehari Gupta).

Some biographers (Beharilal Sarkar and Subol Chandra Mitra) had violently opposed his reform activities. Though he did not follow all the rites and rituals of the Hindus but he did not entirely give up scriptural rites. On the death of his parents he performed all the obsequial rites like a devoted brahmin. He never participated in unnecessary arguments about the existence of God like the Young Bengal and "Positivists". But he did doubt about the Merciful God. In a shipwreck near Puri, nearly seven-eight hundred people died including men, women and children. Mentioning this incident among his close friends, he used to express scepticism about the existence of God. It is indeed surprising that how a brahmo educated in the system of traditional learning accepted the ideal of Neo-humanism in his life. About this his biographer Chandicharan Bandyopadhyay had said, "His conduct and activities in everyday life were not like that of a devoted Hindu. On the other hand, signs of a devout Brahmin was not found in him. That is to say that he was never involved in any sectarian religion. For a few days he frequented the Brahmo Samaj of Devendranath

Tagore but he gave up the association with the Brahmos when he had a difference of opinion with Devendranath (Tagore). He was of the same opinion with some Western social philosophers like Comte, Bentham, Mill and others. That is why he did not want to include Hindu Philosophy in the syllabus of the Sanskrit College. He clearly informed Mr. Mouat, the Secretary of the Department of Education –

“True it is that the most parts of the Hindu system in philosophy do not tally with the advanced idea of modern times.” For this, if the students are taught western Philosophy along with the philosophy of the East then, “young men thus educated, will be better able to expose the errors of Hindu Philosophy”. For this reason to make students of the Sanskrit College competent to cope with modern life he wanted to unite Western philosophy, sociology and history with Indian Culture. The following assessment of Ramendrasundar Trivedi about the inner life of Vidyasagar can be accepted as completely reasonable, “I do not know what kind of faith he had for the God in Heaven, but he was of opinion that it is sometimes necessary to sacrifice one’s own righteousness for the happiness of the living god who is greater even than Heaven.”

There was not only the western ideas and idealism at the root of the New Awakening of the Bengalis which began in the 19th C. Bengal but there was also strong foundation of the Bengalis’ own racial culture and Indian idealism behind it. Otherwise just Anglo-Indian mentality would not have been able to save the race. Not only the Hindu College but the Sanskrit College was also necessary for the synthesis of heterogenous culture. Vidyasagar was the pioneer in synthesizing the two. He stood up against any kind of injustice, immoral practice and indiscipline. Once this brahmin clad in dhoti and *chadar* was denied entry to the museum of the Asiatic Society. He protested against this insult and sent a letter of objection to the Council of the Society against this despicable rule and a hot discussion about this matter was held in the meeting of the Council. At that time there was racial discrimination in the Asiatic Society. Vidyasagar could not get the permission to enter the Society wearing

country-made slippers. But those who had come wearing covered shoes had free access. Vidyasagar did not tolerate this insult of the native attire. Though the management of the then Asiatic Society apologized for this incident yet they did not allow the Indian full access to this institution. It is not known whether Vidyasagar had become a member of this Society since there is no mention of this in the proceedings of the Council. But he had carried out the work of editing the text entitled *Sarvadarahansangraha* published by the Asiatic Society. Considering his contributions to the society, education and women liberation he has to be accepted as one of the most important characters of the reawakening of the 19th C. Bengal and his relevance cannot be denied even today. In a sonnet Wordsworth said about Milton, "Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour, England hath need of thee." Changing this a little we can say, "Vidyasagar, thou shouldst be living at this hour, Bengal hath need of thee".

SOME INFORMATION ABOUT VIDYASAGAR

- 1820 - 26th Sept, born in the village of Virsingha, in the district of Midnapore.
- 1829 - 1st June, admitted in the Calcutta Sanskrit College.
- 1839 - received a certificate of merit in the examination of the Hindu Law Committee.
- 1829-41 - studied in the Sanskrit College for 12 years and 5 months (2nd June 1829 to 4th. Dec 1841).
- 1841 - 29th Dec, joined as the Seristadar or head pundit of the Fort William College.
- 1846 - 6th Apr, assistant secretary of the Sanskrit College.
- 1847 - first prose narrative *Vetal Panchabingshati* was published.
- 1847 - 16th July, resigned from the post of assistant secretary of the Sanskrit College.
- 1849 - 1st Mar, rejoined the Fort William College as the Head Writer and Treasurer.
- 1850 - 5th Dec, Professor of Literature of the Sanskrit College.
- 1850 - Dec, Honorary Secretary of Bethune School.
- 1851 - 5th Jan, teacher of literature and temporary secretary of the Sanskrit College.
- 1851 - 22nd Jan, Principal of the Sanskrit College.
- 1851 - 9th July, admitted kayastha Students along with brahmins and vaidyas in the Sanskrit College.
- 1851 - Dec, gave a chance to any respectable Hindu student to study in the Sanskrit college.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

- 1854 - Jan., a member of the Board of Examination.
- 1855 - 1st May, got the post of School Inspector of South Bengal.
- 1855 - 17th July, founded Normal Schools.
- 1855-58 - founded Model Schools in Nadia, Burdwan, Midnapore & Hooghly.
- 1855 - 4th Oct, made a petition to the government in favour of widow-remarriage.
- 1855 - 27th Dec. made a petition to the government to stop Kulinism (Polygamy).
- 1857 - 16th July, widow-remarriage became legalised.
- 1858 - 3rd Nov, resigned from the post of principal of Sanskrit College.
- 1858 - 15th Nov, published the *Somprakash* magazine.
- 1861 - April, Secretary of Calcutta Training College.
- 1861 - December, took over the management of the *Hindu Patriot*.
- 1864 - 4th July, Honorary Member of the Royal Asiatic Society, London.
- 1871 - 12th Apr, — death of mother in Banares.
- 1873 - Jan, founded the Metropolitan College later known as Vidyasagar College.
- 1876 - 12th Apr, death of father, Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay.
- 1883 - Fellow of the Punjab University
- 1887 - 1st Jan, conferred with the title of C.I.E.
- 1888 - 13th Aug, death of wife Dinamayi Devi.
- 1891 - 29th July, passed away in Calcutta.

PREFACE

The Sarvadarsanasangraha is a work by Mādhavāchārya, the well-known scholiast of the Vedas. It contains short notices of all the systems of Indian Philosophy, and as such is very valuable. It is natural to suppose that every Indian Sanskrit scholar would have possessed a copy of a treatise of so much importance. But it is somewhat singular that manuscripts of the work are very rare, and that the great majority of the learned of this country are probably not even aware of its existence. If not printed now, the Sarvadarsanasangraha would, in all probability, share the common fate of many other valuable relics of Sanskrit learning. To preserve the work from destruction I proposed to the Asiatic Society of Bengal to edit the work for them if they would undertake to print it. My offer was kindly accepted, and the work, under their auspices, is printed and published.

When I first undertook to edit the work, I was under the impression that the task would be an easy one. There were two manuscripts in Calcutta, one in the Library of the Sanskrit College, and the other in that of the Asiatic Society. On first reading the book I thought that the former manuscript was sufficiently correct. But scrutinizing it with the care necessary for publication, I collated it with the copy in the Society's Library and found that without the aid of more manuscripts, the readings in several passages in which the two manuscripts differ, could not be reconciled. No other manuscripts were however procurable in Bengal; but by good fortune I procured three manuscripts from Benares. These were of essential service to me, and it was only after carefully collating them with the texts in Calcutta that I have been able to edit the work.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

I feel it my duty here to express my great obligations to Mr. Edward Hall, late of the Benares Collage, through whose kind executions the Benares manuscripts were received. Without his timely aid it would have been impossible for me to execute the task I had undertaken with the necessary requisite. My obligations are also due to Professors Jaynarayana Tarkapanchanana and Taranatha Tarkavachaspati of the Sankrit College for the material assistance that they afforded to me in the undertaking.*

Sanskrit College

The 20th January, 1858

* Preface to *Sarvadarsanasangraha*, edited by Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar.

ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

MAHATMA GANDHI

The strong movement that is being carried on the Bengal to boycott British goods is of no mean significance. Such a movement has been possible there because education is more widespread and the people in Bengal are more alert than in other parts of India. Sir Henry Cotton has remarked that Bengal holds sway from Calcutta to Peshawar. It is necessary to know the reasons for this.

There is no gainsaying the fact that a nation's rise or fall depends upon its great men. The people who produce good men cannot but be influenced by them. The main reason for the special distinction that we find in Bengal is that many great men were born there during the last century. Beginning with Rammohan Roy¹ one heroic figure after another has raised Bengal to a position higher than that of the other provinces. It can be said that Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was the greatest among them. "Vidyasagar", which means an ocean of learning, was an honorific of Ishwarchandra, conferred on him by the pundits of Calcutta for his profound Sanskrit learning. But Ishwarchandra was not an ocean of learning only; he was an ocean of compassion, of generosity, as well as of many other virtues. He was a Hindu, and a Brahmin too. But to him, Brahmin and Sudra, Hindu and Muslim, were all alike. In any good deeds that he performed, he made no distinction between high and low. When his professor had an attack of cholera, he himself nursed him. As the professor was poor, Ishwarchandra called in the doctors at his own cost and himself attended to the patient's toilet.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

He used to buy *luchi*² and curds and feed the poor Muslims at his own cost, in Chandranagar³, and helped with money those who needed it. If he saw a cripple or any one in distress by the roadside, he took him to his own house and nursed him personally. He felt grief at other people's sorrows and joy at their joys.

Himself he led a very simple life. His dress consisted of a coarse *dhoti*, a shawl of a similar kind to cover his body, and slippers. In the dress he used to call on Governors, and in the same dress he greeted the poor. He was really a *fakir*, a *sannyasi* or a *yogi*. It behoves us all to reflect on his life.

Ishwarchandra was born of poor parents in a small village in the Midnapur *taluka*.⁴ His mother was a very saintly woman, and many of her virtues were inherited by Ishwarchandra. Even in those days, his father knew some English, and decided to give his son a better education. Ishwarchandra began his schooling at the age of five. At the age of eight, he had to walk sixty miles to Calcutta to join the Sanskrit college. He has such a prodigious memory that he learnt the English numerals by looking at the figures on the milestones while walking along the road. At sixteen he became well-versed in Sanskrit, and was appointed a Sanskrit teacher. Rising step by step, he at last became the Principal of the College where he had studied. The Government held him in great respect. But, being of an independent nature, he could not adjust himself to the Director of Public Instruction and resigned his post. Sir Frederick Halliday, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, sent for him and requested him to withdraw his resignation, but Ishwarchandra flatly declined.

His nobility and humanity had their true blossoming after he had given up his job. He saw that Bengali was a very good language, but appeared poor for want of fresh contributions. He, therefore, began writing books in Bengali. He produced very powerful books, and it mainly due to Vidyasagar that the Bengali language is at present in full bloom and has spread throughout India.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

But he also realised that merely writing books was not enough; and so he founded schools. It was Vidyasagar who founded the Metropolitan College in Calcutta. It is staffed entirely by Indians.

Considering that elementary education was quite as necessary as higher education, he started primary schools for the poor. This was a stupendous task in which he needed government help. The Lieutenant-Governor assured him that the Government would bear the cost; but the Viceroy, Lord Ellenborough⁵, was opposed to this and the bills preferred by Vidyasagar were not passed. The Lieutenant Governor was very sorry and suggested that Ishwarchandra might file a suit against him. Brave Ishwarchandra replied : "Sir, I have never gone to a court of law to get justice for myself. How, then, is it possible for me to proceed against you?" At that time other European gentlemen who used to help Ishwarchandra in his work rendered him good financial aid. Not being very rich himself, he often ran into debt by helping others out of their difficulties; nevertheless, when a proposal was made to raise a public subscription for him, he turned it down.

He did not rest satisfied with thus putting higher and elementary education on a sound footing. He saw that, without the education of girls, the education of boys alone would not be enough. He found out a verse from Manu which said that the education of women was a duty. Pressing it into service, he wrote a book on the subject and, in collaboration with Mr. Bethune founded the Bethune College for imparting education to women. But it was more difficult to get women to go to college than to found it. As he lived a saintly life and was very learned, he was respected by all. So he met prominent people and persuaded them to send their womenfolk to the College; and thus, their daughters began to attend the College. Today there are in that College many well-known and talented women of sterling character, so much so that they can by themselves carry on its administration.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

Still not satisfied, he started schools imparting elementary education to small girls. Here food, clothing and books were supplied free of charge. Consequently, one can see to-day thousands of educated women in Calcutta.

To meet the need for teachers he started a Teachers' Training College.

Seeing the very pitiable condition of Hindu widows, he advocated the remarriage of widows; he wrote books and made speeches on the subject. The Brahmins of Bengal opposed him, but he did not care. People threatened to kill him, but he went on undaunted. He got the Government to pass a law legalizing remarriage of widows. He persuaded many men and arranged the remarriage of daughters of prominent men widowed in childhood. He encouraged his own son to marry a poor widow.

The *kulin* or high-born Brahmins were given to taking a number of wives. They were not ashamed of marrying as many as twenty of them. Ishwarchandra wept to see the sufferings of such women; and he carried on his efforts till the end of his life to eradicate this wicked custom.

When he saw thousands of poor people in Burdwan suffering from malaria, he maintained a doctor at his own cost and personally distributed medicines among them. He went to the houses of the poor and gave them the necessary help. In this way he worked ceaselessly for two years, secured government help and called for more doctors.

In the course of this work, he saw the necessity of a knowledge of medicine. So he studied homoeopathy, attained proficiency in it, and began to prescribe medicines to the sick. He did not mind travelling long distances in order to help the poor.

He was equally a stalwart in helping big princes out of their difficulties. If any of them had injustice done to him or was reduced to poverty, Ishwarchandra used to help him

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

with his influence, knowledge and money, and mitigate his distress.

While he was engaged in these activities, Vidyasagar passed away in 1890 at the age of seventy. There have been few in this world like him. It is said that, had Ishwarchandra been born among a European people, an imposing column, like the one raised by the British for Nelson, would have been erected as a memorial to him. However, a column to honour Ishwarchandra already stands in the hearts of the great and the small, the rich and the poor of Bengal.

It will now be clear to us how Bengal provides an example for the other parts of India to follow.

[From Gujarati]

Indian Opinion, 16-9-1905

Collected by—

Sm. Amita Chakraborti

মহাত্মা গান্ধীর দৃষ্টিতে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর

(১৬।৯।১৯০৫ তারিখে Indian Opinion' পত্রিকায় প্রকাশিত মহাত্মাগান্ধীর রচনার
অনুবাদ। অনুবাদিকা—অমিতা চক্রবর্তী)

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বঙ্গদেশে ব্রিটিশ-দ্রব্য-বর্জনের যে প্রবল আন্দোলন চলছে তাঁর গুরুত্ব মোটেই কম নয়। ওখানে এই আন্দোলন সম্ভব হওয়ার কারণ বাংলাদেশে শিক্ষার প্রসার এবং ভারতের অন্যান্য অঞ্চলের চেয়ে বাঙালীর অধিকতর সচেতনতা। স্যার হেনরী কটনের অভিমত অনুসারে কলকাতা থেকে পেশোয়ার পর্যন্ত বিস্তৃত যে আলোড়ন তার মূলে বাংলাদেশ। এর কারণগুলি জানা দরকার।

কোনো জাতির উত্থান বা পতন নির্ভর করে সেই জাতিতে যে সব মহাপুরুষ জন্ম গ্রহণ করেছেন তাঁদের ওপর—এ কথা কোনো মতেই অস্বীকার করা চলে না। যে জন-সমাজ থেকে সজ্জনেরা জন্মলাভ করেন সেই সমাজ এঁদের দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হতে বাধ্য। বাংলাদেশের যে বিশেষ বৈশিষ্ট্য আমরা দেখি তা'হল বিগত শতাব্দীতে সেখানে একাধিক মহাপুরুষের আবির্ভাব ঘটেছিল। রামমোহন রায়' থেকে শুরু করে একের পর এক আদর্শ পুরুষ বাংলাকে অন্যান্য প্রদেশের চেয়ে অনেক উঁচুতে তুলে ধরেছেন। বলা যেতে পারে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর এঁদের সকলের মধ্যে মহত্তম। 'বিদ্যাসাগর' কথাটির অর্থ সাগরের মতই যাঁর বিদ্যার ব্যাপ্তি, এটি একটি সম্মানসূচক উপাধি, তাঁর গভীর সংস্কৃত জ্ঞানের জন্য কলকাতার পণ্ডিতসমাজ তাঁকে এই উপাধি প্রদান করেছিলেন। কিন্তু ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র শুধুমাত্র বিদ্যারই সাগর ছিলেন না, তিনি দয়ার, উদারতার এবং আরও অনেক গুণের সাগর ছিলেন। তিনি হিন্দু এবং ব্রাহ্মণ হলেও তাঁর কাছে ব্রাহ্মণ, শূদ্র, হিন্দু, মুসলিম সকলেই সমান। তিনি যে সব ভাল কাজ করেছেন তার মধ্যে অন্যতম হলো উচ্চ-নীচের কোনো ভেদাভেদ না করা। যখন তাঁর এক অধ্যাপক কলেরায় আক্রান্ত হলেন তখন তিনি নিজেই তাঁর সেবা করতে এগিয়ে এলেন। অধ্যাপক খুবই দরিদ্র, তাই ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র স্বয়ং অর্থব্যয় করে ডাক্তার ডেকে আনালেন, এমনকি রোগীর মলমূত্রও নিজে পরিষ্কার করে দিলেন।

তিনি নিজের টাকায় লুচি ও দই কিনে (চন্দন নগরে) গরীব মুসলমানদের খাওয়াতেন, এমনকি যাদের দরকার হতো তাদের টাকা পয়সা দিয়েও সাহায্য করতেন। রাস্তার ধারে কোন দুস্থ বা অক্ষম লোক দেখলে নিজের বাড়ীতে এনে তার পরিচর্যা করতেন। তিনি যেমন অপরের দুঃখে দুঃখিত হতেন তেমনি আবার তাদের আনন্দও তাঁকে সমভাবে আনন্দিত করত।

নিজে তিনি খুবই সাদাসিধেভাবে জীবন যাপন করতেন। একটা মোটা ধুতি চাদর কিংবা এই ধরনের কোনো আচ্ছাদন—আর এক জোড়া চটি—এই ছিল তাঁর পোষাক। এই পোষাকেই তিনি লাটসাহেব থেকে দরিদ্রতম মানুষটি পর্যন্ত সবার সঙ্গে দেখা করতেন। বাস্তবিকই, তিনি যেন এক ফকির, সন্ন্যাসী বা যোগী! আমাদের সকলের উচিত তাঁর জীবনচর্যা বিষয়ে ভাবনা চিন্তা করা।

মেদিনীপুর তালুকের এক গণ্ডগ্রামে দরিদ্র এক দম্পতির ঘরে তাঁর জন্ম। তাঁর মা ছিলেন বহুগুণযুক্তা সাধ্বী রমণী যাঁর অনেকগুণ ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র উত্তরাধিকারসূত্রে লাভ করেছিলেন, সেকালেও তাঁর বাবা কিছুটা ইংরাজী জানতেন, ছেলেকেও তিনি ভালভাবে লেখাপড়া শেখাতে মনস্থ করেছিলেন। ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রের স্কুলের শিক্ষা শুরু হলো পাঁচবছর বয়সে। তিনি মাত্র আটবছর বয়সে সংস্কৃত কলেজে পড়ার জন্যে ষাট মাইল হেঁটে কলকাতায় এলেন। তাঁর স্মৃতিশক্তি এমনই বিস্ময়কর ছিল যে পথে হাঁটতে হাঁটতে শুধু মাইলষ্টোন দেখেই ইংরাজী সংখ্যাগুলি শিখে ফেললেন। মাত্র ষোল বছর বয়সে তিনি ভালভাবে সংস্কৃত শিখে নিলেন এবং সংস্কৃতের শিক্ষক নিযুক্ত হলেন। পদোন্নতি হতে হতে এক সময় তিনি যে কলেজে পড়তেন সেখানে অধ্যক্ষপদ লাভ করেছিলেন। সরকার বাহাদুর তাঁকে খুবই সম্মান করতেন, কিন্তু স্বাধীনচেতা ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র শিক্ষাবিভাগের অধিকর্তা হিসাবে নিজেকে মানিয়ে নিতে না পারায় ঐ পদে ইস্তফা দিলেন। বাংলার লেঃ গভর্নর স্যার ফ্রেডরিক হ্যালিডে তাঁকে ডেকে পাঠিয়ে তাঁর ইস্তফাপত্র প্রত্যাহার করতে অনুরোধ করেন, কিন্তু তিনি সরাসরি তা প্রত্যাখ্যান করেন।

ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রের মহত্ব ও মানবিকতা যথার্থভাবে বিকাশলাভ করেছিল চাকুরীতে ইস্তফা দেওয়ার পর। তিনি দেখলেন যে বাংলা ভাষা হিসাবে ভাল হলেও নতুন অবদানের অভাবে এর দারিদ্র্য খুবই প্রকট। সুতরাং বাংলাভাষাতেই তিনি গ্রন্থ রচনা শুরু করলেন। তাঁর দ্বারা রচিত হ'লো উচ্চমানের বহু বাংলা গ্রন্থ। বস্তুত বিদ্যাসাগরের জন্যেই বর্তমান বাংলাভাষার পূর্ণ বিকাশ ও সারাদেশ জুড়ে এর প্রসার সম্ভবপর হয়েছে।

কিন্তু শুধু বই লেখাই যথেষ্ট নয়—একথা বুঝতে পেরে তিনি অনেকগুলি বিদ্যালয়েরও প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেন। কলকাতার 'মেট্রোপলিটান কলেজের প্রতিষ্ঠাতাও তিনি। এখানকার সমস্ত অধ্যাপকই ছিলেন ভারতীয়। উচ্চশিক্ষার মত প্রাথমিক শিক্ষার গুরুত্বের কথা বুঝে তিনি বিত্তহীনদের জন্যে বহু প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় স্থাপন করলেন। এ এক বিরাট কর্মযজ্ঞ, এর জন্য দরকার সরকারি সহায়তা। 'সরকারই সব খরচ বহন করবে'—এই বলে, ছোটলাট তাঁকে নিশ্চিত করলেও ভাইসরয় লর্ড এলেনবরোঃ এই সিদ্ধান্তের বিরোধিতা করলেন, ফলে বিদ্যাসাগরের জমা দেওয়া 'বিল' গুলি মঞ্জুর হলো না। ছোটলাট খুবই দুঃখিত হয়ে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রকে জানানলেন—'আপনি আমার বিরুদ্ধে মামলা করতে পারেন।' নির্ভীক ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র উত্তর দিলেন 'মহাশয়, নিজের জন্য সুবিচার পেতে আমি কখনও আদালতের দ্বারস্থ হইনি, তাহলে এখন আমি কি করে আপনার বিরুদ্ধে নালিশ করব?' সে সময় ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রের কাজের সহায়ক ইউরোপীয় ভদ্রজনেরা তাঁকে যথেষ্ট অর্থ সাহায্য করেছিলেন। নিজে ধনী না হলেও অপরের প্রয়োজনে সর্বদা সাহায্যের হাত বাড়িয়ে দেওয়ার ফলে তিনি ঋণগ্রস্ত হয়ে পড়লেন। তা'সত্ত্বেও যখন তাঁর জন্য জনসাধারণের কাছ থেকে টাকা তোলার প্রস্তাব এলো তিনি তৎক্ষণাৎ তা প্রত্যাখ্যান করলেন। প্রাথমিক এবং উচ্চশিক্ষার দৃঢ় ভিত্তি স্থাপন করেই ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র ক্ষান্ত হন নি; তিনি বুঝতে পেরেছিলেন যে শুধু পুরুষদের শিক্ষাই যথেষ্ট নয়, পাশাপাশি নারীদেরও শিক্ষিত করে তোলার দরকার। মনুসংহিতা থেকে এমন একট শ্লোক বেছে নিলেন যেখানে বলা হয়েছে 'কন্যাদেরও শিক্ষাদান করা কর্তব্য।' এ' বিষয়ে কাজ করতে গিয়ে তিনি একটি বই লিখে ফেললেন এবং বেথুন সাহেবের সঙ্গে স্ত্রী শিক্ষার জন্য 'বেথুন কলেজ' স্থাপন করলেন। কিন্তু এখানে পড়ার মত মেয়েদের যোগাড় করাই কষ্টকর হয়ে দাঁড়ালো। তিনি অত্যন্ত জ্ঞানী হওয়ায় ও সৎভাবে জীবন যাপন করায় সকলেরই শ্রদ্ধাভাজন ছিলেন, ফলে বিশিষ্টব্যক্তিদের সঙ্গে দেখা করে তাঁদের বাড়ীর মেয়েদের তাঁর কলেজে পাঠানোর জন্য অনুরোধ করায় মেয়েরা কলেজে আসতে শুরু করল। বর্তমানে এই কলেজে সুখ্যাতি ও প্রতিভাময়ী একাধিক মহীয়সী মহিলা থাকায় এই কলেজের কর্তৃত্বভার এঁরাই বহন করতে সক্ষম।

এতেও সন্তুষ্ট না হয়ে তিনি ছোট ছোট মেয়েদের প্রাথমিকশিক্ষার জন্য 'বালিকা বিদ্যালয়' স্থাপন করলেন। এখানে খাদ্য বস্ত্র ও পুস্তক সবই দেওয়া হতো বিনামূল্যে তাই এখন কলকাতায় হাজার হাজার শিক্ষিত মহিলার দেখা পাওয়া যায়।

উপযুক্ত শিক্ষকের প্রয়োজন মেটাতে তিনি শিক্ষক শিক্ষণ কলেজ স্থাপন করলেন।

হিন্দু বিধবাদের শোচনায় অবস্থা দেখে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র 'বিধবা বিবাহ আন্দোলন' শুরু করেন। এই বিষয়ে তিনি বহু বক্তৃতা ও গ্রন্থরচনার কাজ চালিয়ে যেতে লাগলেন। ব্রাহ্মণেরা তাঁর বিরোধিতা করলেও তিনি তা' উপেক্ষা করলেন, এমনকি লোকে তাঁকে হত্যার হুমকি দিলেও অবিচলিতভাবে তিনি নিজের কাজ চালিয়ে যেতে লাগলেন। তাঁর চেষ্টায় সরকার বাধ্য হলেন বিধবা বিবাহের পক্ষে আইন প্রণয়ন করতে। বহু জনকে তিনি বুঝিয়ে তাঁর মতের সপক্ষে আনলেন এবং কিছু খ্যাতিনামা ব্যক্তির পরিবারের বাল্যবিধবা কন্যাদের পুনর্বিবাহের ব্যবস্থা করলেন। নিজের পুত্রকেও তিনি এক দরিদ্র বিধবার পাণিগ্রহণ করতে উৎসাহিত করেছিলেন।

'কুলীন' তথা উচ্চবংশীয় ব্রাহ্মণেরা বহুবিবাহ করতে অভ্যস্ত ছিলেন, এমনকি গোটা বিশেক বিয়ে করেও তাঁদের লজ্জা হ'তো না। এইসব রমণীদের দুঃখ দেখে ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র চোখের জল রোধ করতে পারতেন না। জীবনের শেষদিন পর্যন্ত তিনি এই ঘৃণ্য প্রথা বিলুপ্ত করার চেষ্টা করে গেছেন।

যখন তিনি দেখলেন বর্ধমানে হাজার হাজার গরীবলোক ম্যালেরিয়াতে আক্রান্ত তখন তিনি নিজের অর্থে চিকিৎসক নিয়োগ করে তাদের চিকিৎসা করিয়ে ওষুধ দিতে লাগলেন। গরীব মানুষদের ঘরে ঘরে ঘুরে তিনি সাহায্য পৌঁছে দিতেন। এইভাবে একটানা প্রায় দু'বছর পরিশ্রম করার পর সরকারী সহায়তা লাভ করে আরও বেশি সংখ্যায় চিকিৎসক নিয়োগ করতে পারলেন। কাজ করতে গিয়ে তিনি বুঝতে পারলেন যে ওষুধের বিষয়েও কিছু জানা উচিত, সুতরাং 'হোমিওপ্যাথি' বিষয়ে পড়াশোনা করে যথেষ্ট জ্ঞান অর্জন করার পর অসুস্থদের ওষুধ দিতেও শুরু করলেন। দরিদ্রের সেবায় তিনি বহুদূর হেঁটে যেতেও কুণ্ঠিত হতেন না।

আবার কোনো ধনীও অসুবিধায় পড়লে তিনি সমভাবেই তাঁর পাশে এসে দাঁড়াতেন। যদি কারও প্রতি অবিচার হতো, কিংবা কেউ কপর্দকহীন হয়ে পড়তেন তখন ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র তাঁর জ্ঞান, অর্থ এবং প্রভাব প্রয়োগ করে এই দুরবস্থা কাটিয়ে উঠতে সাহায্য করতেন।

এই ধরনের কাজে ব্যাপৃত থাকতে থাকতেই ১৮৯১ খৃষ্টাব্দে সত্তর বছর বয়সে বিদ্যাসাগর পরলোক গমন করেন। এ' জগতে তাঁর মত মানুষ দুর্লভ। বলা হয় তিনি যদি ইউরোপে জন্ম গ্রহণ করতেন তাহলে ব্রিটিশরা নেলসনের জন্যে যেমন স্মরণস্তম্ভ স্থাপিত করেছে তাঁর জন্যেও অনুরূপ স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ নির্মিত হ'তো। সে যাইহোক,

বাংলাদেশের উচ্চ-নীচ, ধনী-নির্ধন নির্বিশেষে সকলের অন্তরেই ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রের প্রতি সম্মান সূচক স্মৃতিস্তম্ভ প্রোথিত হয়ে গেছে।

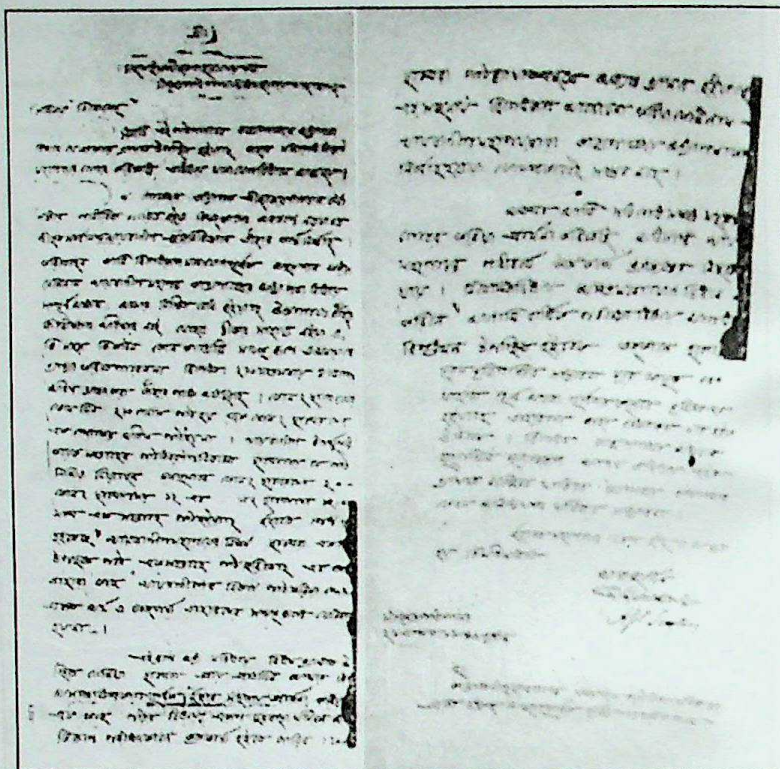
কি ভাবে বাংলাদেশ ভারতের অন্যান্য অঞ্চলের কাছে দৃষ্টান্তস্থল হয়ে উঠেছে—
এ'কথা এখন আমাদের কাছে পরিষ্কার।

মহাত্মাগান্ধী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত পাদটীকা

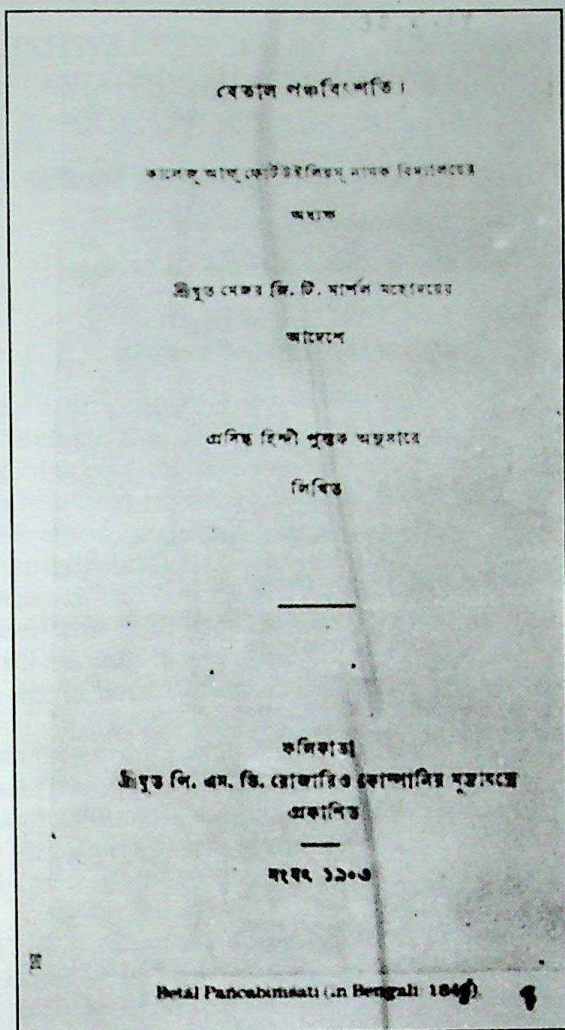
১. (১৭৭৪-১৮৩৩) এক বিরাট মাপের সমাজ ও ধর্ম সংস্কারক, ব্রাহ্মসমাজের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা।
তিনি সতীদাহ প্রথার বিলোপ ঘটিয়েছিলেন এবং শিক্ষা বিস্তারের জন্য প্রচণ্ড পরিশ্রম করেছিলেন।
২. খমীর না মিশিয়ে ময়দার একরকম ভাজা রুটি।
৩. পশ্চিমবাংলার তৎকালীন ফরাসী উপনিবেশ।
৪. পশ্চিমবাংলায় অবস্থিত।
৫. ভারতের বড়লাট ১৮৪২-৪৪

Sir
 I have the honor to request
 that you will be so good as to tender
 to the Council of Education my resignation
 of the office of Assistant Secretary to the
 Sanskrit College. My reason for
 resigning is, that I do not find there
 opportunities of being useful in -
 anticipation of which I applied for
 the appointment -
 Yours truly
 Ishwarchandra Sharma
 11 April 1917

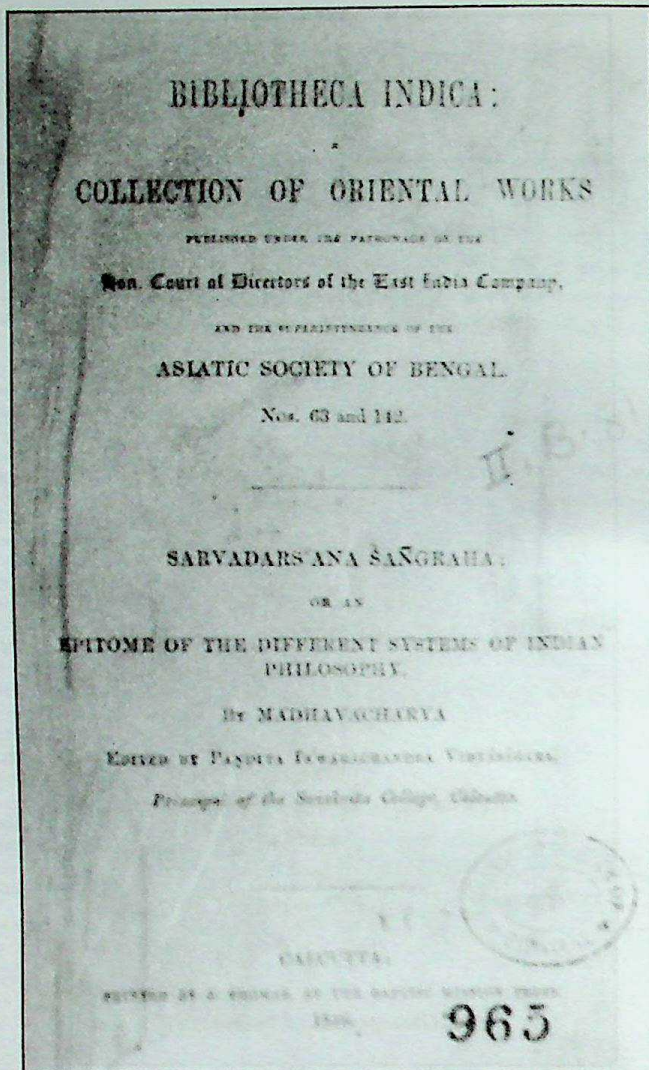
English handwriting of Vidyasagar



Bengali handwriting of Vidyasagar



Title Page of *Betalpanchavimsati*



Title Page of *Sarvadarshan Sangraha*

ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR
AS A PROMOTER OF FEMALE
EDUCATION IN BENGAL*

(Based on unpublished State Records)

by

BRAJENDRANATH BANERJI

If the 18th century saw a revolution in the political history of Bengal, the 19th century saw another and equally far-reaching revolution in our life and thought. This second change has been rightly called the Renaissance of India. At the time of the English conquest, not only were our indigenous kingdoms in utter dissolution, but our society also was decayed and our mediaeval civilization was dead. The old order was dead, but the new order did not come into being till seventy-five years after the battle of Plassey, i.e., in the age of Lord William Bentinck.

This beneficent revolution in intellect and morals received its start from Rajah Rammohun Roy. It went on gathering force and volume till it created a new literature, a new faith, a new social organization and a new political life—in short, a new civilization in India.

In the intellectual sphere it took two forms; first the acquisition of the new learning and scientific method of the West, and secondly the recovery of the literature, thought and spirit of our ancient forefathers in their true and pure original form. In both of these fields Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar took a leading part. He was not only the first great critical Sanskrit scholar among the modern Bengalis,

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he was also the founder of vernacular education on sound modern lines and the creator of the first English college conducted entirely by Indians. Great as Vidyasagar admittedly was a social reformer and philanthropist, he was not less great as an educational pioneer in two very important and untried fields. A study of this aspect of his career from original records is, therefore, a source of instruction to us, who are easefully reaping where he sowed with so much toil and anxiety.

The education of Indian women did not form a recognized part of the Government's duties before 1850, although a beginning in this direction had been made by some respectable Indians (notably Rajah Radhakanta Deb) and the Christian missions. In 1849, a very successful lay school for girls was opened in Calcutta by Drinkwater Bethune—a great well-wisher of the Indians. It was at first named the Hindu Female School and afterwards the Bethune Female School. Bethune was fortunate in having Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar as his co-adjutor and fellow-worker from the beginning. During his Presidentship of the Council of Education he had known the pandit as a highly talented and untiring worker, and so he now induced him to accept the Honorary Secretaryship of his institution (Dec. 1850). Soon after Bethune passed away on the 12th of August 1851. From October 1851, however, Lord Dalhousie had borne all the expenses necessary for keeping the institution going, and on his Lordship's departure in March 1856 it became a recognized Government institution, supported by the State, and was placed by the Lieutenant-Governor under the superintendence of Mr. Cecil Beadon. In his letter dated 12th August 1856; Mr. Beadon submitted a scheme to the Bengal Government, proposing certain measures as likely to bring the character and objects of the school more prominently to the notice of the higher classes of the Hindu community, and to induce them to educate their daughters in this institution. The appointment of a Committee was also suggested, including among its members Rajah Kalikrishna Deb Bahadur, Rai Harachandra Ghose Bahadur, Babu Ramaprasad Roy and Babu Kashiprasad Ghose. Mr.

Beadon was anxious to secure the services of Vidyasagar as Secretary to superintend the affairs of the Bethune School. He remarked in his letter to the Lieut. Governor :—

"It may be thought by His Honour no less than justly due to the past services and distinguished position of Pandit Ishwarchandra Sharma to appoint him Secretary to the Committee."¹

The Bengal Government gave its assent to the proposal. Mr. Beadon was elected President and Vidyasagar Secretary of the Committee.²

Like Drinkwater Bethune, Vidyasagar was a staunch advocate of female education as a means of improving the condition of his countrymen. But his zeal and activity were not solely confined to the Bethune Female School.

The Home authorities, in the famous Education Despatch of 1854 and elsewhere, had expressed the intention of giving full and cordial support to female education, and early in 1857 Halliday found himself in a position to take up the problem of the establishment of female schools in Bengal. He sent for Vidyasagar, then the Principal of the Calcutta Sanskrit College and an Assistant Inspector of Schools, South Bengal and had a free discussion with him on the subject. They fully realized the difficulty that was then to be expected in attempting to establish a female school, the chief obstacle being the reluctance with which respectable Hindus could be persuaded to allow their girls to attend a public school. Vidyasagar, however, felt that, by energetic exertion, he would be able to enlist the sympathies of the people in such a good cause.

The Pandit was soon able to report the opening of a girls' school at Jowgong in Bardwan. He made an application for a monthly grant on its behalf, as will be seen from the following letter which he wrote to the Director of Public Instruction on 30th May 1857 :—

"It is with great pleasure I have the honour to report that

the inhabitants of Jowgong in Bardwan have at the suggestion of the Head Master of the Model School at that village established a female school there. It was opened on the 15th of April last and now musters on its rolls 28 girls of different ages, ranging from 4 to 11 years, the majority of whom are daughters of respectable Brahmans and Kyasthas of the place. The school is at present located at the dwelling house of Babu Nabagopal Mazumdar the most influential man of the village and opens in the mornings when the Head Master of the Model School, assisted by another, performs the duties of teachers. The establishment of the institution was intimated to me at the commencement, but as I felt doubtful about its stability, I did not think it proper to report the circumstance to you at that time. Having however visited it during this week I have been led to hope that there is every chance of it flourishing within a short time. Not only do the inhabitants take the liveliest interest in its success, but the girls themselves appear to prosecute their studies with great delight and attention. Arrangements for the management of the school are, therefore, urgently required, and I beg to submit them in the accompanying tabular statement for your sanction.

"It will be seen that in the statement I have applied for two pandits as, under present circumstances, I do not think the school can be properly managed with a less number. It is true that the number of girls is only 28 but as each girl has a separate lesson to learn, one man cannot conveniently teach them all. The contingent charges have been estimated at Rs. 5 per month. This sum includes the cost of class-books which it is intended to supply gratis to the pupils, because the inhabitants claim the same privilege in this respect as that allowed in the Bethune School."³

TABULAR STATEMENT

Female School at Jowgong, Zila Bardwan :

Head Master	25
Asst. Master	15
Maidservant	2
Contingencies	5
Rs.	47

However, it seemed to the Director that two masters were unnecessary for the school, — at all events in its first stage — and after a personal conference with the Pandit, he recommended to Government a monthly grant of Rs. 32 for the institution.

Some months before this the Director had submitted to Government three applications of a similar nature, dated 18th March 1857, received from Mr. Pratt, the Inspector of Schools, South Bengal, for grants-in-aid to three female schools, which were proposed to be established at Dwarhatta (thana Haripal) and Gopalnagar (thana Baidyabati) in zila Hughli, and at Narogram in Bardwan.⁴ The Lieutenant-Governor sanctioned monthly grants for the support of all the female schools in question, the inhabitants of the villages undertaking in each case to provide a suitable school-building. In sanctioning these grants the Lieutenant-Governor desired to be informed of any other applications for grants-in-aid to female schools which the Director might have received from the Divisional Inspectors "as he would be glad to have them submitted for his favourable consideration."⁵

The attitude of the Bengal Government towards the education of Indian women appeared to the Pandit to be encouraging. He had already put the Model Vernacular Schools for boys into working order, and now directed his attention chiefly to opening female schools. He naturally assumed that his plan — similar to that followed in the case of the Model Vernacular Schools for boys — had generally been approved by Government, and under this impression he opened a number of female schools in the districts under his charge. As usual he reported the opening of the schools to the Director of Public Instruction and applied for monthly grants. That officer, in accordance with previous instructions, sent up the Pandit's applications, along with others, to the Lieutenant-Governor for consideration.⁶

Between November 1857 and May 1858 Vidyasagar established 35 female schools with an average total attendance of 1,300 girls. The following is a list of the villages where

these schools were located, the dates on which they were opened, and the monthly expenditure involved in maintaining them⁷ :—

HUGHLI	.. Potbah	.. 24	Nov., 1857	..	Rs. 29
	Daspur	.. 26	" "	..	" 20
	Boinchi	.. 1	Dec. "	..	" 32
	Digshooi	.. 7	" "	..	" 32
	Talandu	.. 7	" "	..	" 20
	Hatinah	.. 15	" "	..	" 20
	Hoyera	.. 15	" "	..	" 20
	Nopara	.. 30	Jany. 1858	..	" 16
	Udairajpur	.. 2	March "	..	" 25
	Ramjibanpur	.. 16	" "	..	" 25
	Akabpur	.. 28	" "	..	" 25
	Shiakhala	.. 1	April "	..	" 20
	Mahesh	.. 1	" "	..	" 25
	Birsingha	.. 1	" "	..	" 20
	Goalsara	.. 4	" "	..	" 25
	Dundipur	.. 5	" "	..	" 25
	Daypur	.. 1	May "	..	" 25
	Raujapur	.. 1	" "	..	" 25
	Malaipur	.. 12	" "	..	" 25
	Bishnudaspur	.. 15	" "	..	" 20
BARDWAN	.. Ranapara	.. 1	Dec. 1857	..	" 20
	Jambooi	.. 25	Jany. 1858	..	" 30
	Srikishenpur	.. 26	" "	..	" 25
	Rajarampur	.. 26	" "	..	" 25
	Jot-Srirampur	.. 27	" "	..	" 25
	Dinehat	.. 1	March "	..	" 20
	Kashipur	.. 1	" "	..	" 21
	Sanooi	.. 15	April "	..	" 25
	Rasulpur	.. 26	" "	..	" 31
	Banteer	.. 27	" "	..	" 20
	Belgachi	.. 1	May "	..	" 20
MIDNAPUR	.. Bhangaband	.. 1	Jany. "	..	" 30
	Badanganj	.. 10	May "	..	" 31
	Shantipur	.. 15	" "	..	" 20
NADIA	.. Nadia	.. 1	" "	..	" 28
					Rs. 845

On 13th April 1858 the Lieutenant-Governor reported to the Supreme Government that he had received some 26

applications from the Director of Public Instruction for grants-in-aid to female schools which it was proposed to establish in the different districts of East and South Bengal, but that he could not sanction them unless the rules for grants-in-aid were to some extent relaxed. He pointed out that the Home authorities, in their despatch of 1st October 1856, had held out hopes that school-fees would not be required in the case of female schools, but he thought that some further encouragement was required. He accordingly proposed that the grant-in-aid rules should be so far modified in favour of female schools, that whenever a suitable school-building was provided, and the attendance of not less than 20 girls was promised, all other expenses for maintaining the school be defrayed by Government.⁸

The Supreme Government, however, replied, on 7th May 1858, refusing to allow the abrogation of the grant-in-aid rules, in favour of female schools, and holding that unless female schools were really and materially supported by voluntary aid, they had better not be established at all.⁹

These orders of the Supreme Government greatly affected Vidyasagar's activities, because, he had, in anticipation of Government's sanction, established quite a number of female schools on the understanding that the inhabitants would provide suitable school-buildings while their maintenance charges would be defrayed by Government, and it now appeared to him that all his labours had been fruitless and the schools set up by him would have to be closed immediately. Another problem was the payment of the salary to their staff. They had not received their pay from the commencement, and the amount due up to 30th June 1858 was Rs. 3,439-3-3. The following letter, which the Pandit addressed to the Director of Public Instruction on 24th June, explains the situation :—

“With reference to the orders of the Government of India bearing date the 7th ultimo forwarded with your circular letter No. 1316 dated 29th idem, I have the honour to state that in anticipation of the sanction of Government, female schools were opened by me in several villages in

the districts of Hughli, Bardwan, Nadia and Midnapur and the requisite establishment entertained in them. The schools were opened on the condition that the inhabitants of each village would provide a suitable school house, the expenses for their maintenance being defrayed by Government. The Supreme Government, however, have in their orders quoted refused to grant any aid to the schools on the above condition and the institutions must therefore be closed. But it is necessary that the establishment should receive their pay which they have not had since the commencement and which, I trust, Government will be pleased to pass.

2. It is true that the establishment was entertained by me without orders. But I must be permitted to mention that at the commencement of my operations I was not discouraged either by yourself or Government. If I had been, I would never have ventured to open so many schools nor been placed in my present difficult position. The establishment, having been appointed by me, naturally look up to me for payment, and it will certainly be a great hardship if I am made responsible for it, especially when the expenditure has been incurred on furtherance of an object of public utility."¹⁰

The Director recommended the Pandit's case to the Bengal Government in the following terms :—

"I would venture to recommend to the generous consideration of Government the Pandit's petition to be shielded from personal and pecuniary liability on account of the female schools which, in anticipation of the sanction and approbation of Government, he was the means of establishing.

I would solicit attention to the memorandum annexed to the Pandit's letter, as the Government may perhaps hardly be aware of the extent of this officer's voluntary and unostentatious labours in the cause of female education. If so much can be done in the villages by one individual burdened with other and distant duties, occupying a position of no great authority, and almost without aid or countenance from his superiors, how much might not be done in the same way if the Government were to afford its

sanction and support ? On the other hand, what discouragement may not be inflicted on the cause if the benevolent exertions of the officer referred to are seen to lead only to his discredit and pecuniary loss."¹¹

The Bengal Government in turn placed the whole matter before the Government of India, on 22nd July 1858, with the following remarks :—

"The Lieutenant-Governor desires earnestly to support the recommendation of the Director of Public Instruction, and His Honour is not without hope that when the Hon'ble the President in Council is made aware of the number of promising female schools which had been actually established by the unostentatious zeal of the very intelligent and meritorious Principal of the Sanskrit College, and which will now, together with the keen and anxious hopes and anticipations to which they have given rise, be suddenly extinguished, he may perhaps be disposed spontaneously to reconsider the orders of the 7th May."¹²

The Supreme Government, before passing orders on the subject, demanded a full explanation of the circumstances under which the Pandit was, or conceived himself to be, encouraged to incur so heavy an expense in establishing the schools in question in anticipation of sanction, and also desired to know who was responsible for the encouragement under which the Pandit claimed to have acted. As at least one-half of the schools had been established, some of them for several months before the Bengal Government's letter dated 13th April 1858, the Supreme Government enquired whether the circumstance was known to the Lieutenant-Governor at that time and, if so, why it was not then mentioned.¹³

In reply to the inquiry of the Government of India, the Pandit wrote thus to the Director of Public Instruction on 30th September 1858 :—

"I have the honour to state that as some female schools on this footing had already, been established with the sanction of the Government, I believed that the plan was generally approved. I invariably reported to your office the

establishment of every new school, and usually in the month succeeding that in which it was opened. My several applications for the establishments required in these schools were always entertained by you though no orders were ever passed, and during a period of several months I was not in any way discouraged in the course I was taking, which I believed to be in accordance with the wishes of the Government."¹⁴

The Director forwarded the Pandit's letter to the Bengal Government, supporting his own case with the following observations :—

"For my part, knowing or believing that the Pandit had been in personal communication with the Lieutenant-Governor on the subject during my own absence from Calcutta, and inferring from your letter (No. 503) of the 21st October that the Government was prepared to regard his exertions with favour, I did not hesitate to send on his reports to Government (as Mr. Woodrow in my absence had done) without delay, discouragement, or remark.

"I regret to say that the untoward result with which the action of the department in this matter had been attended has given a 'heavy blow and great discouragement' to the cause of female education, from the effects of which, I fear, nothing that is likely to be now done will enable it speedily to recover."¹⁵

However, the Lieutenant-Governor settled the question more equitably, as his reply to the Government of India (27th Nov. 1858) will show :—

3. The Lieutenant-Governor desires to submit the explanation of the Pandit for indulgent consideration, as it appears he has been acting under a misconception. It appears that previous to the application made to the Government of India in my letter of the 13th April last for sanction to grant to 26 female schools recommended by the Pandit and the Director of Public Instruction, which application was not complied with four grants on similar terms had been sanctioned by the Lieutenant-Governor on the 21st October 1857 under a mistaken view of his authority. This was afterwards overlooked by the Lieu-

tenant-Governor and the irregularly sanctioned grants to these schools continuing uninterrupted, seemed, not unreasonably to have led the Pandit to suppose that all other such schools would receive grants on similar terms. This must have fully excused him for continuing to recommend grants to schools of a similar kind, but the question still remains why did the Pandit set the schools going and incur expense for their establishments before he had received sanction for them from Government. This question the Pandit has not answered, but he might have submitted a not unreasonable excuse for his irregularity had he stated that the wording of his application always expressed that the schools about which he wrote had been established, and specified the dates on which they had each been opened. And the Director of Public Instruction understood this as requiring retrospective sanction and so entered it in his prescribed tabular statement. But this was undoubtedly overlooked when my letter was written dated 13th April last. There has been evidently a general misconception about these grants. For some time the Lieut.-Governor was under the impression that he could sanction them himself and when he became better informed he found that it was little more than a form to send them up the Supreme Government for sanction, believing that the Supreme Government was certain to approve and sanction them and to applaud all extension of such female schools, especially when established at the desire of the people themselves and partly at their expense. This useful view naturally commended itself to the Lieutenant-Governor's subordinates so that the Pandit thought he could not please the Government better than by encouraging female schools, and the Director of Public Instruction supposed he had only to sanction a recommendation to aid a promising girls' school and it was sure to be sanctioned. The Lieutenant-Governor states all this merely as a fact without attempting to defend or extenuate the error into which he himself, not less than his subordinates, is shown to have fallen. But he trusts it may be viewed indulgently, all the circumstances having been considered."¹⁶

The biographers of Vidyasagar are responsible for the story which has obtained currency that the Government did not do justice to the Pandit and refused to relieve him of

the pecuniary liability which he had incurred by doing Government's work and which he had ultimately to meet out of his own pocket! The Supreme Government's letter, dated 22nd December 1858, conveying its final orders on the subject of the female schools established by Vidyasagar, conclusively proves that the Pandit was paid all his expenses:—

"It is to be regretted that the Pandit's scheme of opening female schools on a plan opposed to the orders of the Hon'ble Court but in the name of the Government and in anticipation of sanction, should not have been discouraged at once. As it is evident, however, that the Pandit acted in good faith, and with the encouragement and approbation of his superiors. His Honour in Council is pleased under all circumstances, to relieve him from responsibility for the sum of Rs. 3,439-3-3 actually expended on these schools, and to direct that it be paid by the Government.

"With regard to the future the President in Council observes that so far as can be gathered from these papers, there is no security for the permanent character of any of the schools, and that the only sound material guarantee for their success, namely the voluntary support of the neighbourhood, is wholly wanting. It is not even stated that school houses have been built. Not an argument is brought forward to shake the decision of the Government of India already taken, that the main principle of the grant-in-aid rules shall not be relaxed in favour of these female schools. If keen and anxious hopes really exist, a small monthly payment is not very violent test of them.

"With reference to the above considerations and to paragraph 38 of the Hon'ble Court's despatch, dated the 22nd June last, the President in Council must decline to give his sanction to the grant of any public money for the continued support of the female schools opened by Pandit Ishwarchandra, or for the establishment of the Government schools it is proposed to set up in their stead. The correspondence will be forwarded for the consideration of the Rt. Hon'ble the Secretary of State, with a recommendation that a grant not exceeding Rs. 1,000 per mensem may be made for the establishment of female schools in

Hughli, Bardwan, and the 24-Parganas, a portion to be expended in assisting such schools as were established by Pandit Ishwarchandra Sharma, and a portion on a few model schools to be supported by the Government.”¹⁷

On a reference from the Government of India (10 January 1859) the Secretary of State for India replied (12 May 1859) that owing to the financial pressure caused by the Mutiny Government was not then in a position to entertain the proposal of making a permanent grant in aid of female schools, but reserved its consideration for a future occasion.¹⁸

Vidyasagar had retired from Government service in November 1858 and, it is said, that his resignation was due in part to his differences with the Director of Public Instruction on the question of the establishment of female schools. But even the loss of a monthly income of Rs. 500 and the refusal of all financial support by the Government did not make Vidyasagar despair of the future of the institutions he had established. In order to set the girls' schools going, he opened a Female School Fund to which many distinguished Indians (notably Rajah Pratap Chandra Singh of Paikpara) and high Government officials contributed. It will be seen from the following letter which the Pandit wrote to the Hon'ble Sir Bartle Frere on 11th October, 1863 that his efforts generally in the cause of female education were appreciated by his countrymen :—

“.. You will no doubt be glad to hear that the Mofussil Female Schools to the support of which you so kindly contributed, are progressing satisfactorily. Female education has begun to be gradually appreciated by the people of districts contiguous to Calcutta, and schools are being opened from time to time.”¹⁹

Lieutenant-Governor Beadon also encouraged the Pandit by subscribing to the Fund :—

“I have now the pleasure to enclose a cheque for Rs. 330 on account of Sir Cecil Beadon's subscription to the Female Schools for the half year of 1866. This would have

been sent before but the cheque book was accidentally left behind". (17 August 1866).²⁰

VIDYASAGAR'S SERVICES TO THE BETHUNE SCHOOL

Vidyasagar was made Honorary Secretary of the Bethune School Committee in August 1856, and a member²¹ of the Committee in January 1864. In spite of the numerous demands on his time and attention, he always took a lively interest in the welfare of that institution. We get a glimpse of the condition of the school and the progress made by it during his Secretaryship in the following report (dated 15 Dec. 1862) :—

"Reading, writing, arithmetic, biography, geography, and history of Bengal, with gallery lessons on objects form the course of study. Needle-work and sewing are likewise taught. Instruction is imparted to the pupils through the medium of the vernacular. The tutorial staff consists of a Head Mistress, with two female assistants and two pandits. Besides general superintendence, the Head Mistress teaches needle-work to the first and second classes and revises the lessons given to them by the pandits. The second mistress teaches needle-work and sewing to the remaining classes, assisted by the third mistress. The third mistress teaches in addition the class consisting of beginners in which the phonetic system is being experimentally introduced. The pandits teach all the books read in the several classes.....

"As regards the number of admissions, the Committee beg to observe that there has been a steady increase from 1859. The number at present on the rolls is ninety-three. It would have exceeded 100 ere this, if the Committee had not been obliged to reject applications for admission for some time from want of the means of conveyance. The inconvenience has since been removed by the provision of a third carriage, and it is hoped that the anticipated increase will soon take place. It may be as well to mention, with reference to this third conveyance, that, Rajah Pratap Chandra Singh Bahadur presented an omnibus, and that some of the members of the Committee, and a few other native friends of female education, subscribed for a pair of horses.

"As regards the proficiency attained by the first class, the Committee regret to observe that, owing to early withdrawals, the majority of the pupils are unable to prosecute their studies up to the desired standard. In cases, however, where girls are admitted at an early age, and permitted to remain at school till the age of eleven or twelve, they attain a fair amount of knowledge in the different subjects taught.

"From the manner in which the number of admissions has recently gone on increasing, the Committee trust that the institution is rising in the estimation of those classes of the community for whose benefit it was originally established. The wealthier classes of native gentlemen do not indeed seem as yet to be availing themselves directly of the advantages offered by the school; a very few admissions have as yet been made from those classes. The Committee, however, are happy to believe that home education for females is being resorted to in many families amongst the wealthier classes; and this result, they believe, is in a considerable degree owing to the beneficial influence of the Bethune School.

"If a large number of conveyances were at the disposal of the Committee, the school might be made more extensively useful. It will be understood, however, that if the number of children should exceed a certain limit, increased resources will then be required in order to supply an extra staff of instructors, etc."²²

Miss Mary Carpenter's name is well known in this country as a philanthropic worker and friend of the Indian people. She paid a visit to Calcutta during the latter part of 1866. She wished very much to promote female education in India, and on her arrival in Calcutta sought to make the acquaintance of Vidyasagar who was well known as a champion of the cause of female education. Mr. Atkinson, the Director of Public Instruction, wrote a letter to the Pandit on 27th November 1866 making an appointment with him to meet Miss Carpenter at the Bethune School.

She visited some of the female schools in the vicinity of Calcutta, accompanied most of the time by Vidyasagar, with

whom she had contracted a sincere friendship at her first meeting. In December 1866 she visited the Uttarpura Girls' School along with Vidyasagar, the D.P.I., and Mr. Woodrow—and Inspector of Schools. On the return journey the Pandit met with a serious accident—his buggy (dog-cart) capsizing and causing severe injuries to his liver. In consequence of this accident his health was greatly impaired, and it paved the way for the fatal malady which brought about his death in July 1891. But Vidyasagar paid no heed to the decay of his health and, like a true patriot, continued to work hard for the good of his country.

Miss Carpenter moved the Government to undertake the establishment of a Normal School for the training of native female teachers to be accommodated temporarily in the premises of the Bethune School. On 1st September 1867 Sir William Grey, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, asked for Vidyasagar's views on the proposal. The Pandit, however, was opposed to the measure and he have the following reply :—

“Since we met last, I have made careful enquiries and have thought over the subject, but I regret to say that, I see no reason to alter my opinion as regards the difficulty of practically carrying out Miss Carpenter's scheme of rearing a body of native female teachers either in connection with the Bethune School or independently, such as may be acceptable to the bulk of the Hindu community and worthy of their confidence. Indeed, the more I think about it the more am I convinced that I cannot conscientiously advise the Government to take the direct responsibility of setting in motion a project which, in the present state of the native society and native feeling, I feel satisfied, will be attended with failure. You can easily conceive whether respectable Hindus will allow their grown-up female relatives to follow the profession of tuition and necessarily break through the present seclusion, when they do not permit the young girls of ten or eleven years to quit the zenana after they are married. The only persons, whose services may be available, are unprotected and helpless widows, and apart from the consideration whether morally they will be fit agents for educational purposes, I have no hesitation in saying that the very fact of their

dispensing with the zenana seclusion and offering themselves as public teachers will lay them open to suspicion and distrust and thus neutralize the beneficial action aimed at.

"I think the Government cannot pursue a better course on this subject than what has been indicated in the India Government's letter lately published in the papers. The best test of popular feeling will be the application of the grant-in-aid principle. If the people are willing to carry out Miss Carpenter's idea, they should be assisted with liberal grants by Government. Although the great bulk of the Hindu community, so far as I can perceive, will not avail themselves of such assistance, still there are particular individuals who seem to be very sanguine on this subject and if they are sincere and earnest they will, at any rate, it may be hoped, come forward and with Government aid, begin the experiment.

"I am free to confess that I do not place much reliance in them; but they will have no right to complain under the rules announced by the Government of India.

"I need hardly assure you that I fully appreciate the importance and desirableness of having female teachers for female learners; but if the social prejudice of my countrymen did not offer an insuperable bar, I would have been the first to second the proposition and lend my hearty co-operation towards its furtherance. But when I see that success is by no means certain and that the Government is likely to place itself in a false and disagreeable position, I cannot persuade myself to support the experiment.

"As regards the Bethune School, I entirely go with you that the results are not proportionate to the amount expended upon it, but at the same time I cannot recommend its abolition altogether. As a memento of the services to the cause of female enlightenment in India of the great philanthropist whose name the Institution bears, it has, I submit, a claim to the support of Government. In the next place, it is very desirable that there should be a well-organized female school in the heart of the metropolis, to serve as a model to sister institutions in the interior. The moral influence of the present institution in native society has been undoubtedly great. It has, in fact, paved

the way to female education in surrounding districts and this, in my humble opinion, is no mean return for the large sums which have been annually expended upon it. But I must say that there is great room for economy and improvement. The expenses, I think, can be reduced to nearly half the present amount without detriment to the efficiency of the institution.

"I intend to go to the North-Western Provinces shortly for prolonged change for the benefit of my health and if you wish to know my views on the re-organization of the Bethune School, I shall be happy to await your return to Calcutta and confer with you on the subject." (1st Oct. 1867).

The Lieutenant-Governor acknowledged receipt of the Pandit's letter on 14th October, 1867 in the following terms:—

"I am greatly obliged to you for your letter of the 1st instant; it is both useful and interesting. I hope you will not, on any account, postpone your visit to the N.W. Provinces, and I trust that you will obtain a revival of health from the change.

"Should I find you in Calcutta however a few days hence, I shall be most happy to see you and to hear your views as to the re-organization of the Bethune School. Otherwise you can perhaps find leisure to write to me on the subject from the N. West.

"If you should desire to have letters of introduction to any of the Government officers in the N.W. Provinces, I shall be glad to assist you in that way. I shall be at Belvedere from the 18th inclusive."

The Government of Bengal, however, favoured Miss. Carpenter's scheme, and an opportunity for giving it a trial soon arose.

Some time about the middle of 1867 the Bethune School Committee were led to believe, from the falling off in the number of pupils, as well as from other circumstances, that

the condition of the school required a searching enquiry and, accordingly, at a special meeting held for the purpose in July 1867, a Sub-Committee, consisting of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Kumar Harendra Krishna Deb and Prasanna Kumar Sarvadhikari, was appointed. The Sub-Committee met, enquired fully into the subjects, and submitted their report on 24th September, 1867. This report disclosed the fact that gallery teaching had been neglected, the children were not well taught, the promotions were not properly made, and that the distribution of the teaching agency had not been very judicious. The Bethune School Committee maintained that the school would not flourish or recover its position as long as Miss Pigott was at its head.²³

In its letter dated 3rd March, 1868 the Bengal Government, while concurring with the desirability of an early termination of the service of the head Mistress, wrote to the Committee of the school as follows :—

"I am to request at the same time that the Committee will be so good as not to proceed to the engagement of another Mistress without communicating with the Lieutenant-governor. His Honour is disposed to think that the opportunity should be taken to render the building bequeathed by the late Mr. Bethune and the large annual grant from the general revenues which is now connected with it more useful in the promotion of female education than he believes it to be under present arrangements, and this end, the Lieutenant-Governor is led to believe may be materially served by combining with a Female School on a more moderate scale than the present one, a Normal School for female teachers.

"If it is determined to utilize the Bethune School building, and the funds connected with that building for such a purpose, it will be desirable to bring the whole institution into more close and direct connection with the Education Department than it is at present. The Lieutenant-Governor will be glad to know if in this event the Committee of native gentlemen who have hitherto, with an English President, conducted the affairs of the Bethune School, would be willing to act as a Consultative Committee in co-operation with the Divisional Inspector of Schools."²⁴

The Committee refused to take part in the management of the institution in future if they were placed on the footing suggested, and their Hony. Secretary, pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar gave the following reply to the Bengal Government on 13th June. 1868:—

“As regards the establishment of a Female Normal School, the Committee, in their letter to the Director of Public Instruction,²⁵ have stated at length their views, and they desire me to forward a copy of the same for His Honour's information.

“The members of the Committee, I am desired to state, regret much their inability to act in the proposed Consultative Committee under the divisional Inspector of Schools for the managment of the Normal School.”²⁶

The Lieutenant-Governor, before passing final orders in this important matter, desired the D.P.I for a full expression of his opinion after consulting Mr. Woodrow, the Inspector of Schools, Central Division.²⁷

The D.P.I. held that both economy and efficiency would be best ensured by combining to the Normal School and the Bethune School in one institution under a single Superintendent, subject to the direct control of the Education Department.²⁸

The Lieutenant-Governor approved the scheme proposed by the Director.²⁹ One Mrs. Brietzche was, on 27th January 1869, appointed Lady Superintendent of the Bethune and Normal Schools for three years on salary of Rs. 300 per month. The Bethune School Committee was dissolved, and the D.P.I. conveyed thanks to the members of the Committee—specially to Vidyasagar, their able Secretary—for their past services.

Vidyasagar, although not very hopeful of the success of the new arrangement, gave the authorities every possible assistance whenever asked, as will be seen from the Woodrow's letter to the D.P.I., dated 2nd March, 1869:—

"I have the honour to report that pundit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar made over to me the documents relating to the Bethune School on the 23rd instant [February]. He also spent a long time in going with me over the school and its grounds and discussing the means necessary to make it suitable for the residence of Hindu ladies.

"He kindly offered to give me every assistance in his power in the establishment of the Normal School though he entertains but slight hopes of its success while placed in Calcutta."³⁰

But the pundit proved a true prophet and, before some three years were over, Sir George Campbell, the next Lieutenant Governor, ordered the Female Normal School—attached to the Bethune School—to be closed after 31st January, 1872, as he was satisfied that if an undertaking of this nature was to succeed in the existing state of Indian society, it must be started and managed by the people of the country according to their feelings and fashions.³¹ The order for the immediate abolition of the Normal School was conveyed to the D.P.I. in the following letter :—

"On a general review of the whole subject, it is clear that a three years' experiment the Female normal School has unquestionably failed.....The Lieutenant-Governor is himself too inclined to think that there is much in the view taken by the ladies most experienced in these matters, viz., that it may be very dangerous to give women education and a certain freedom of action without the sanction of *some religion*.....

"The Female Normal School will, therefore, be closed after the 31st January, 1872."³²

It will be seen from the foregoing what ardent interest pundit Ishwarchandra continued to take throughout his life in the cause of female education in Bengal. After his demise in July 1891, a body of Hindu ladies perpetuated the great Pundit's memory in the following manner :—

"The Committee beg to announce that they have recently received the sum of Rs. 1,670 from the Secretary to the

Ladies' Vidyasagar Memorial committee in Calcutta, for the establishment of an annual scholarship tenable for two years to be awarded to a Hindu girl who after passing the annual examination in the third class of the school, desires to prepare herself for the University Entrance Examination. The late pundit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar was the co-adjutor and fellow-worker of Mr. Bethune, when the school was founded, and since then continued, so long as he lived, to take the keenest interest in its welfare. It is, therefore, a source of great gratification to the Committee to find that a body of Hindu ladies in Calcutta should have interested themselves in this manner to perpetuate the memory of the late Pundit Vidyasagar who, during his lifetime, in addition to the philanthropic work to which he devoted his whole life, had done so much to promote Female Education in Bengal."³³

References

1. Letter from C. Beadon to W. Grey, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, dated 12th August 1856—*Education Con.* 4 September 1856, No. 166.
2. Bengal Government to C. Beadon, and to Vidyasagar dated 30th August 1856—*Ed. Con.* 4 Sept. 1856, Nos. 168 & 170.
3. *Education Con.* 22 Oct. 1857, No. 72.
4. D.P.I. to the Govt. of Bengal, No. 384 dated 1st May 1857; No. 709 dated 9th July 1857.—*Education Cons.* 22nd October, 1857, Nos. 68, 71. For Mr. Pratt's letters, *idid.*, Nos. 69, 72.
5. Govt. of Bengal to the Offg. D.P.I., dated 21st October 1857. —*Ed. con.* 22nd Oct. 1857, No. 74.
6. Letter from the D.P.I. to the govt. of Bengal, dated 15th Feb. 1858. For the tabular statement, see *Ed. Con.* 24 June, 1858, No. 167C.
7. *Education Con.* 5 August 1858, No. 16. See. also *Ed. Cons.* 24 June 1858 Nos. 167 A and B, H-I-K-L; *Ed. Con.* 2 Decr. 1858, No. 5.
8. *Education Con.* 24 June 1858, No. 167 No.
9. *Education Con.* 24 June 1858, No. 167 O.

Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar : Present Times

10. Letter from Ishwarchandra Sharma, Special Inspector of Schools, South Bengal, to W. Gordon Young, Director of Public Instruction, dated 24th June 1858. — *Education Con.* 5th August 1858. No. 15.
11. *Education Con.* 5th August 1858, No. 14.
12. *Ibid.*, No. 17.
13. *Education Con.* 16th September 1858, No. 1.
14. *Education Con.* 2nd Decr. 1858, No. 4.
15. Letter from W. Gordon Young, Director of Public Instruction, to the Junior Secy. to the government of Bengal, dated 4th October 1858 — *Education Con.* 2 Dec. 1858, No. 3.
16. *Education Con.* 2nd December 1858, No. 6.
17. Letter from C. Beadon, Secretary to the Govt. of India to C.T. Buckland, Junior Secy to the Govt. of Bengal, dated 22nd December 1858. — *Education Con.* 20 Jan, 1859, No. 9.
For the minutes of the members of the Supreme Council, indemnifying the Pundit, see *Education Branch Con.* 24 Dec. 1858, No. 5 (Imperial Records.)
18. *Education Con.* 14 July 1859, No. 27.
19. Mitra's, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 173.
20. Mitra's, *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar*, p. 173.
21. S.C. Bayley, Junior Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal, to Pandit Ishwarchandra Sharma, dated 19th Jany. 1864. — *Ed. Con.* Jany. 1864, No. B. 160.
22. From pandit Ishwarchandra Sharma, Hony. Secretary, Bethune School Committee, to the Hon'ble A. Eden, Offg. Secy. to the govt. of Bengal, dated the 15th Decr. 1862 — *Education Con.* Decr. 1862, Nos A. 59-62.
23. *Education Con.* March 1868, No. A. 8.
24. *Education Con.* March 1868, No. A. 9.
25. This is a lengthy letter which W.S. Seton-Karr (the President of the Bethune School Committee) addressed to the D.P.I. on 18th Feby., 1867, negating the proposals of Mary Carpenter for the establishment of a Female Normal School in Calcutta, contained in the D.P.I.'s letter to the Bethune School Committee, dated 16 Feby., 1867. — See *Ed. Con.* July 1868, No. A. 69.
26. *Education Con.* July 1868, Nos. A. 68-70; Supplement to the Calcutta Gazette, dated 3rd Feby., 1869.
27. Bengal Govt. to D.P.I. dated 20 July, 1868. — *Education Con.* July 1868, Nos. A. 68-70.
28. D.P.I. to Bengal Govt. dated 28 Dec., 1868. — *Education Con.* March 1871, Nos. B. 43-56.
29. Bengal Govt. to the D.P.I., dated 25th January, 1869. — *Education Con.* March 1871, Nos. B. 43-56.
30. H. Woodrow, Inspector of Schools, Central Dvn. to the D.P.I., dated 2 march, 1869., *Ibid.*

31. "A rival school [was] opened by Babu Keshav Chandra Sen with funds supplied by Miss Carpenter, but in direct opposition to her wishes...Babu Keshav Chandra Sen is now about to close his school on the strong remonstrances of Miss Carpenter, who has refused to allow the funds supplied by her to be spent on its support."—D.P.I. to Bengal govt., dated 27th Dec., 1871.—*Ed. con. Jany. 1872, Nos. A. 30-36.*
32. The Under-Secy., govt. of Bengal to the D.P.I., dated 24th Jany., 1872.—*Education Con. Jany. 1872, Nos. A. 30-36.* See also *Ed. Con. April 1872, Nos. A. 54-58.*
33. In the presence of H.E. the Viceroy and Governor-General of India—Lord Elgin, and many other notable European and Indian gentlemen—Bethune College—5th March, 1894. Annual Report.

WORKS OF VIDYASAGAR

BENGALI

BETĀL PAÑCABIMŚATI (1847)

A collection of tales based on a famous Hindi book named BAITĀL PaCCĪSĪ. A textbook for the students of the Fort William College written at the instance of its Secretary Major G.T. Marshall.

BĀNGĀLĀR ITIHĀS (Part II) (1848)

Based on the last nine chapters of Marshman's HISTROY OF BENGAL with omissions and additions from another source.

JĪBANCARIT (1849)

Lives of eminent men; selected and translated from the collection made by Robert and William Chambers, for the benefit native students.

BODHODAY (1851)

A collection of edifying tales in simple Bengali for children, based on Chambers's RUDIMENTS OF KNOWLEDGE and other books.

SĀMSKṚTA BYĀKARANER UPAKRAMANIKĀ (1851)

Help-book for beginners of Sanskrit containing basic grammatical rules.

RJUPĀTH – Part I (1851); Part II (1852); Part III (1851)

The first part contains tales from the famous Sanskrit Book PAÑCATANTRA while the two other parts comprise selected portions from various Sanskrit prose and poetical works.

SĀMSKṚTABHĀṢĀ O SĀMSKṚTASĀHITYA ŚĀSTRA BIṢAYAK PRASTĀB (1853)

Opinions about Sanskrit language and literature read out in the Bethune Society of Calcutta and later distributed in book-form.

BYĀKARAN KOU MUDĪ Part I (1853) : Part II (1853); Part III (1854); Part IV (1862)

A competent and comprehensive book with detailed treatment of Sanskrit grammar.

ŚAKUNTALĀ (1854)

Containing the story element of Kālidāsa's immortal drama ABHIJÑĀNAŚAKUNTALAM.

BIDHABĀBIBĀHA PRACALITA HAOYĀ UCIT KINĀ –
ETADBIŚAYAK PRASTĀB – 1st Book (1855 January). 2nd Book
(1855 October)

Resolution on the propriety of introduction of widow re-marriage, printed in book-form. The first book contains relevant scriptural sanctions, the second is a rejoinder to protests from the orthodox circle.

These books were translated into English by Vidyasagar and published in 1856 as MARRIAGE OF HINDU WIDOWS. They were also translated into Marathi by Viṣṇu Paraśurām Śāstrī and published in 1865.

BARNAPARICAY – Part I (1855), Part II (1855)

The first step to reading for Bengali children with graded lessons beginning from the alphabet; in two parts which were once essential reading in every primary school of Bengal. They make up two separate thin books.

KATHĀMĀLĀ (1856)

Collection of fables translated from those by Aesop.

CARITĀBALĪ (1856)

Brief life-sketches of a few great men.

PĀṬHMĀLĀ

Collection of selected pieces from various sources. This was once the prescribed Bengali text for the Entrance Examination of the University of Calcutta.

MAHĀBHĀRAT (UPAKRAMANIKĀ BHĀG) (1860)

An introduction to the epic MAHĀBHĀRAT.

SĪTĀR BANABĀS (1860)

An account of Sītā's days in the forest based partly on the RĀMĀYAṆ and partly on a play by Bhababhūti.

ĀKHYĀNMAÑJARĪ (1863); Part I and Part II-Revised version (1868); Part II(1888)-remaining previously published Part II as Part III a popular story book.

ŚABDAMAÑJARĪ (1864)

Half-finished Bengali lexicon. Starting from the first letter অ (a) it proceeds upto the letter ন (na) and the last item of entry is 'Nibṛtti' (meaning 'abstention').

BHRĀNTIBILĀS (1869)

Narrative version of Shakespeare's THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

BAHUBIBĀHA RAHIT HAOYĀ UCIT KINĀ ETADBIṢAYAK BICĀR

Treatise containing scriptural injunctions against the then prevalent custom of polygamy in Bengal. The first book was published in 1871 and the second, a rejoinder to the critics of the first, was brought out in 1873.

BĀMANĀKHYĀNAM (1873)

Translation of 117 Sanskrit verses composed by Madhusūdan Tarkapañcānan.

NIṢKṚTILĀBHPRAYĀS (1888)

Refutation of the charge of plagiarism in connection with his primer BARNAPARICAY, levelled by Jogendranāth Vidyābhūṣaṇ; written at the request of his close friends and relatives.

Polemical Booklets in Bengali and under different Pen-names

ATI ALPA HAILA (1873)

on polygamy; pen-name used: *Kasyacit upajukta bhāiposya*—literally meaning by a certain capable nephew'.

ĀBĀR ATI ALPA HAILA (1873)

Same pen-name used and on the same subject.

BRAJABILĀS (1884)

On widow remarriage; pen-name used: *Jatkiñcit apūrba mahākābya kabikulatilakasya kasyacit upajukta bhāiposya*—meaning by a certain capable nephew of an eminent poet who has composed a somewhat unique epic.'

BIDHABĀBIBĀHA O JAŚOHAR HINDUDHARMARAKṢINĪ SABHĀ (1884)

On issues of widow remarriage; pen-name: *Kasyacit tattvānveṣiṇaḥ*—'by a certain truth-seeker'.

The first edition came out in 1864. In the second edition the booklet was renamed BINAY PATRIKĀ; IT WAS PUBLISHED IN 1887.

RATNAPARĪKṢĀ (1886)

Same pen-name as used in the first two. Written in criticism of three leading paṇḍits who attempted to prove widow remarriage as going against the scriptures.

Writings appearing In Periodicals and in Books

The book MAHĀBHĀRAT (UPAKRAMANIKĀBHĀG) in the foregoing list was first printed as an article *Mahābhārater Upakramaanikā* in TATTWABODHINĪ PATRIKĀ (periodical) (1849-1853).

SARBAŚUBHAKARĪ PRATRIKĀ (periodical) published his article *Bālyabibāher dos* or 'Demerits of early marriage' in 1850, in the first issue of the Patrikā.

NĪTIBODH (1851)—A book by Rājkr̥ṣṇa Bandyopādhyāy containing moral precepts of which the first seven are mentioned in the publisher's notice to have been contributed by Vidyasagar. The first part of the book BIDHABĀBIBĀHA PRACALITA HAOYĀ UCIT KINĀ in the foregoing list first formed part of TATTWABODHINĪ PATRIKĀ (1855).

A portion of the second part of the same book appeared in the same journal (1856).

EDITED WORKS

Bengali

ANNADĀMAṄGAL 1st and 2nd parts (1847)

PADYASAMGRAHA 1st part (1888)

Collection of verses from the Bengali RĀMĀYAṆ by Kṛtibās.

PADYASAMGRAHA (2nd part—1890)

Collection of verses from ANNADĀMAṄGAL by Bhāratcandra Rāy.

English

Selections from the writings of Goldsmith.

Selections from English Literature.

Poetical Selections.

Hindi

BAITĀL PACCĪSĪ (1852)

Introduction in English.

Sanskrit

SARBADARŚANASAMGRAHAH (1853-58) Published by the Royal Asiatic Society; Introduction in English.

RAGHUVANŚAM (1853)

Only the main text with necessary omissions.

KIRĀTĀRJJUNĪYAM (1853)

ŚĪSUPĀLBADH (1857)

VĀLMĪKI RĀMĀYANAM (1860)

With annotations.

KUMĀRSAMBHAB (1861) With commentaries by Mallināth; Introduction in Bengali.

KĀDAMBARĪ (1862)

MEGHADŪTAM (1869) With Mallināth's commentaries; Bengali introduction.

UTTARACARITAM (1870)

ABHIJÑĀNAŚAKUNTALAM (1871)

HARŚACARITAM (1883)

SAMSKṚTA RACANĀ (1889) Compilation of a few Sanskrit essays written during boyhood with their Bengali rendering.

ŚLOKAMAÑJARĪ (1890) A number of puzzling Sanskrit rhymes.

Posthumous Publication

BIDYASAGARCARIT (1891)

Incomplete autobiography published by his son Nārāyaṇcandra Vidyāratna

BHŪGOLKHAGOLBARNANAM (1892)

A prize winning collection of rhymed essays on geography and astronomy; contains 408 ślokas.

A piece titled PRABHĀBATĪ SAMBHĀṢAN. first appeared in a journal named SĀHITYA (1892, April).

Two essays—namely MĀTRBHAKTI (Tales from the life of George Washington) and CHĀGALER BUDDHI (The Clever Goat), were published in SAKHĀ, a children's magazine, in April, 1893 and January, 1894, respectively.

ŚABDA-SAMGRAHA

Compilation of Bengali vocabulary was published in SĀHITYA PARĪṢAT PATRIKĀ (1901)

RĀMER RĀJYĀBHIṢEK

Was in the press in 1869 and only six formats had been rolled off when Vidyasagar was told of another book of the same name having already appeared under the authorship of Śaśibhūṣaṇ Caṭṭopādhyāy and so he called a halt to the printing of his own book which thus remained unpublished.

This was included in RĀMER ADHIBĀS, a book by his son Nārāyan Vidyāratna in 1909 (p.68-86).

UNPUBLISHED

VĀSUDEV CARIT

A Bengali compilation from ŚRĪMADBHĀGABAT written at the request of the authorities of Fort William College but due to disapproval of the said authorities, could not see the light.

TRANSLATIONS IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

English

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Tran. H. Jane harding, London.

Gujarati

ŚAKUNTALĀ

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Sharad Karyalaya, 1947.

SĪTĀ BANABĀS

Tran. Ramanlal Soni Modosa.

Sharad Karyalaya, 1947.

Oriya

ĀKHYĀNAMAÑJARĪ

Tran. Candranāth Rāy. 1872.

BODHODAY

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BYĀKARAṆA KOUMUDĪ *Tran. Gobindacandra Paṭṭanāyaka. 1870.*

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ŚAKUNTALĀ *Tran. Banamālī Siṅha. 1854.*

SAMSKṚTA BYĀKARNA UPAKRAMANIKĀ *Tran. Gobindacandra Paṭṭanāyaka. 1864.*

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Bengali

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Courtesy : The Golden Book of Vidyasagar
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এতদ্বিতক প্রস্তাব। কলিঃ সংস্কৃত
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SRLNAGAR

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Rabindranath on Vidyasagar

“আজ আমরা বিদ্যাসাগরকে কেবল বিদ্যা ও দয়ার আধার বলিয়া জানি; এই বৃহৎ পৃথিবীর সংস্রবে আসিয়া যতই আমরা মানুষ হইয়া উঠিব, ততই আমরা পুরুষের মতো দুর্গমবিস্তীর্ণ কর্মক্ষেত্রে অগ্রসর হইতে থাকিব, বিচিত্র শৌর্য-বীর্য-মহত্ত্বের সহিত যতই আমাদের প্রত্যক্ষ সন্নিহিতভাবে পরিচয় হইবে, ততই আমরা নিজের অন্তরের মধ্যে অনুভব করিতে পারিব যে, দয়া নহে, বিদ্যা নহে, ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগরের চরিত্রে প্রধান গৌরব তাঁহার অজ্ঞেয় পৌরুষ, তাঁহার অক্ষয় মনুষ্যত্ব—এবং যতই তাহা অনুভব করিব ততই আমাদের শিক্ষা সম্পূর্ণ ও বিধাতার উদ্দেশ্য সফল হইবে এবং বিদ্যাসাগরের চরিত্র বাঙালির জাতীয় জীবনে চিরদিনের জন্য প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়া থাকিবে।”

Michael Madhusudan Dutt's assessment of Vidyasagar

“The man to whom I have applied has the genius and wisdom of an ancient sage, the energy of an Englishman, and the heart of a Bengali mother.”